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ABSTRACT

This volume addresses the dual problems of providing rapid educational responses in global conflict and crisis situations and assessing the role of education in the root causes of these conflicts. Education and training are key components of international relief responses to emergencies resulting from conflicts. Even more important, rehabilitation and reconstruction processes are now seen as "windows of opportunity" to redesign educational systems in view of fostering stability and promoting peace. This report summarizes the conclusions of an international workshop that brought together researchers, national education officials, and representatives of donor agencies in an attempt to address these concerns. The group focused on four case studies chosen to represent crisis situations of different natures. The case studies featured Cambodia, Colombia, Palestine, and Sierra Leone. The general objectives of the workshop included: (1) re-situate current educational concerns pertaining to conflict and crisis situations in a socio-historical perspective; (2) identify the different types of conflict situations (causes, nature of conflict, duration, resolution) and the role of education at various phases before, during, and after such conflicts; and (3) exchange views among national researchers, government officials, and representatives of both public and private development aid agencies on their respective analyses of the role of education and training in crisis situations and the appropriateness of current intervention strategies. The report includes references, statistical and tabular data on each country, and a list of conference participants. (MJP)

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FINAL REPORT AND CASE STUDIES OF THE WORKSHOP ON

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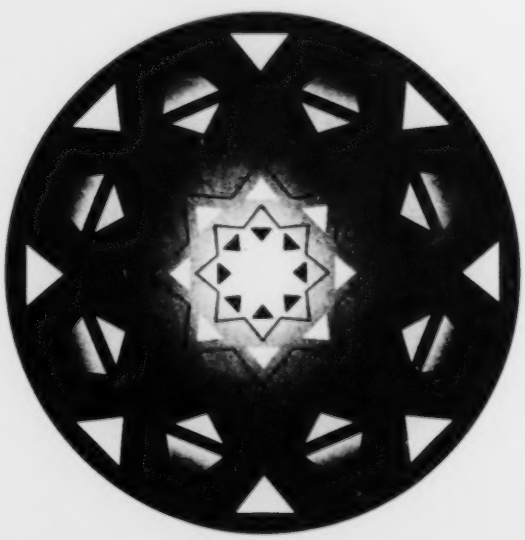

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FINAL REPORT AND CASE STUDIES

OF THE WORKSHOP ON

EDUCATIONAL DESTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION IN DISRUPTED SOCIETIES

15–16 MAY 1997, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

ORGANIZED JOINTLY BY THE

INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF EDUCATION

AND THE UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA

Edited by Sobhi Tawil

INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF EDUCATION

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

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BACKGROUND

Since the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, 1990), education in conflict and crisis situations has emerged as a new challenge to be addressed by the international community. Indeed, the initial optimism of a post-Cold War world based on peace has given way to the recognition of the spread of social, political and ethnic antagonisms. It has come to be recognized that education and training are key components of international relief responses to the emergencies resulting from these conflicts. There is now an urgency not only to provide rapid educational responses to the consequences of complex emergencies, but also to address the role of education in the root causes of conflict. Rehabilitation and reconstruction processes are now consequently perceived as "windows of opportunity" to redesign educational systems in view of fostering stability and promoting peace.

Following the Inter-Agency Consultation Meeting on Education for Humanitarian Assistance and Refugees organized by the IBE (9-11 May 1996) largely devoted to post-crisis intervention, the Amman Mid-Decade Review of Education for All devoted one its open dialogue sessions to "Basic Education in Crisis Situations" (16-19 June 1996). The Amman Affirmation incorporated these concerns and identified education in conflict situations as an emerging challenge in the following terms:

> Given the escalating violence due to growing ethnic tensions and other sources of conflict, we must respond by ensuring that education reinforces mutual respect, social cohesion and democratic governance. We must learn to use education to prevent conflict and, where crises do occur, ensure that education is among the first responses, thereby contributing to hope, stability, and healing the wounds of conflict.

RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES

The workshop brought together researchers, national education officials and representatives of donor agencies in an attempt to address these concerns in both a retrospective and perspective approach. The work of the group centred on four case studies chosen so as to represent crisis situations of entirely different natures from various regions in the South (Cambodia, Colombia, Palestine and Sierra Leone). The general objectives of the workshop included:

1. Re-situate current educational concerns pertaining to conflict and crisis situations in a socio-historical perspective.
2. Identifying the different types of conflict situations (causes, nature of conflict, duration, resolution...) and the role of education at various phases before, during, and after such conflicts (cause, prevention, preparedness, coping mechanisms, relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction).
3. Exchanging views between national researchers, government officials, and representatives of both public and private development aid agencies on their respective analyses of the role of education and training in crisis situations and the appropriateness of current intervention strategies.

FRAMEWORK FOR DISCUSSION

The end of the Cold War has not brought about an era of peace and international co-operation as expected. Post-Cold War optimism and hope in a new epoch, free of conflict and based on global co-operation, has given way to a recognition of a more antagonistic and fragmented world. Indeed, a new scale of conflicts and civil strife has been observed since the outset of this new period, exacerbating existing political, social and cultural differences. In Africa alone, two-thirds of the continent's fifty-two countries were involved in civil conflicts in 1993 (Ottone, 1996: 233).

Moreover, many critics have highlighted the incapacity of the international community both to prevent and respond adequately to these conflicts. Conventional international responses have focused on conflict resolution and emergency relief and less attention has been given to rehabilitation assistance. Concerns pertaining to educational reconstruction have received very little attention. A recent review of selected sources on war-torn societies (UNRISD, 1995) clearly shows that the consequences of war on education and training systems are not the key focus of policy-makers and researchers. This apparent lack of concern is worrying given both the importance attributed to education in the process of national development, as well as the central role played by the state in the educational sector.

What little attention has been paid to education in disrupted states has tended to focus on the re-establishment of the normative process within the context of reconstruction. Very little attention has been given to a critical re-examination of the role of education at different phases of the development of political, social and ethnic conflicts. It would be important to examine education as an arena for conflict and explore the role of education in reflecting and contributing to the precipitating factors of social disintegration, the impact of armed conflict on education, as well as the ways in which education systems may contribute to the process of national reconstruction.

BEFORE THE CONFLICT

The role of education as a catalyst of conflict?

Education may serve both as an instrument of emancipation increasing the opportunities available to individuals and groups, and as a tool of ideological domination and political repression. To what extent do educational policy choices and the nature of management systems explain or reflect the climate of political tension leading up to conflict? As the causes of conflict are often partly attributed to distorted economic development characterized by widespread poverty and inequities in the distribution of wealth, in what way does education contribute to the process of social disintegration that may result in the outbreak of armed conflict?

Given the spread of ethnic conflicts, what can be learnt about the capacity of educational systems to contribute to the construction of a strong national identity in multi-ethnic states?

Contribution of education to conflict prevention

Can education systems provide early warning signals regarding the process of disintegration of civil society and the emergence of conflicts? If that is the case, how can the role of evaluation and monitoring be defined?

Do clear examples of educational intervention programmes as instruments of peace and enhanced tolerance exist? Can educational systems be effective spaces for conflict management? Does education prepare to cope with conflict?

DURING THE CONFLICT

Education as an arena for conflict

What impact do different types of conflict have on education systems (e.g. destruction of physical infrastructure, killing of teachers or displacement (brain drain), breakdown of central management systems, recruitment of students as combatants)?

What lessons can be drawn from the extent and nature of educational destruction (e.g. strategies to disrupt educational process and/or destroy educational model and its products).

Educational coping strategies and resistance mechanisms

What are some of the local coping strategies during periods of prolonged conflict or the resistance mechanisms of communities under occupation? To what extent can external assistance reinforce local coping mechanisms and institutions in view of promoting a sustainable pattern of development?

AFTER THE CONFLICT

The process of reconstruction in disrupted states requires a context of safety and security. The nature of the cessation of armed conflict or the peace achieved is a crucial element in defining the strategic policy choices in the reconstruction process. Once security structures are in place, political, social and economic reconstruction must not only address the immediate needs created by the impact of armed conflict, but also the ways in which the post-conflict society has been (or needs to be) transformed from the pre-war model.

Educational assistance in emergencies

Educational assistance measures designed to respond to immediate emergencies (e.g. programmes designed to minimize the psychological traumas of child soldiers, street children, orphans and displaced children, refugee education programmes, land-mine awareness programmes) are an integral part of the rehabilitation process. To what extent do these measures rely on external assistance and how do they contribute to long-term solutions?

Political rebuilding

Moving from relief and emergency assistance to sustainable development requires legitimate political structures on which the rebuilding of educational capacity (management systems) can be based. What role should the new political system(s) play in the provision and management of education and training? Are there any lessons that can be drawn regarding what went wrong in the past?

Education and social reconciliation

What role can education play in the process of social reconciliation on which social rebuilding is so intimately dependant? What questions regarding the objectives, content, methods, and management of education need to be addressed? Need to redefine curriculum and delivery systems as an integral part of the transformation process from the pre-war model of society.

Economic rebuilding

Reconstruction of a country's productive capacity (HRD) requires coherent planning to meet both immediate training needs (e.g. reintegration of former soldiers, short vocational training for vulnerable segments of the population) and long-term educational demands. Should training and human resource development be given precedence over basic education? How to (re)define strategic choices in educational investment in light of the lessons that may have been learnt from the past.

CHAPTER II

Final report of the meeting, Geneva, 15–16 May 1997

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INTRODUCTION

The role of education, and of schooling more particularly, in conflict situations is ambivalent. It may sow the seeds that contribute to the outbreak of violence and conflict, assist in coping with and recovering from crises, as well as contribute to the resolution and prevention of such conflicts. With the escalation of political, social, religious, and ethnic antagonisms observed since the end of the Cold War, education in conflict and crisis situations has emerged as a major concern. Most recently, the mid-decade meeting of the Education for All Forum (Amman 1996) stressed the importance of ensuring that education be incorporated within the first emergency interventions; that is, that education should be included early on within the linear relief-rehabilitation-development continuum. Indeed, re-establishing basic social services, including education, are crucial to society's return to normal life.

However, despite growing concerns for education in emergencies and the process of recovery, the more fundamental consequences or implications of violence and conflict on education and training systems do not appear to be receiving any serious attention. This more fundamental questioning and re-examination of education and training do not appear to be a major concern of both policy-makers and researchers within the framework of reconstruction. What attention has been paid to education in conflict/crisis situations has traditionally tended to focus on the re-establishment of the normative process in view of fostering stability and the return to normality. 'Healing the wounds' of conflict, however, involves more than the rehabilitation of education services and requires a critical re-examination of the role and purpose of education during different phases in the development of political, social and ethnic conflicts. The absence of such critical re-examination would tend to seriously undermine the vision of a linear emergency-relief-rehabilitation-development continuum and may favour a more cyclical vision.

Such critical re-examination is also crucial if the reconstruction process is to be viewed as a 'window of opportunity' to redesign educational systems so as to foster stability and promote peace through the inculcation of new values based on principles of justice, solidarity and participation. There now appears to be a general trend to place more emphasis on education for peace as a tool for conflict prevention. However, the end of conflict and the return to social order imply more than a return to what was being done in the past. We would have to attempt to understand, to the extent possible, what went wrong. What can be learnt about the role of education in the emergence of conflict and crisis situations of various natures.

Educational intervention in conflict situations must be grounded in sound analysis. Acknowledging the fact that the adequacy of intervention strategies in pre-, conflict, and post-conflict situations must be context-specific, it was thought necessary to examine four significantly different cases in order to reach a more global understanding of the role played by

education in the development of conflict situations. Discussions were therefore organized around the various issues relative to the question of (i) education as a potential catalyst in the outbreak of conflict/violence, before turning to the question of (ii) education in emergencies, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. Examination of these two sets of themes would help shed some light on the meaning to be given to the concept of (iii) peace education in various contexts. The workshop brought together university-based researchers, as well as practitioners, and policy-makers (cf. Annex 1) involved with the formulation, implementation, and funding of intervention on the ground. This report is an attempt to capture the dynamics of the debates and discussions among participants in terms of the relevant themes and issues identified and the types of questions raised.

A word of caution

The four studies that follow illustrate violence of different natures and varying intensities ranging from the normalization of structural violence in everyday life in Colombia, to the extreme devastating impact of prolonged warfare on Cambodian society: from the disintegration of a social order and the outbreak of civil war in Sierra Leone, to the struggle for self-determination of Palestinian society under occupation. Each of the case studies illustrates different stages in the development of violence and conflict and the ways in which education systems are involved. Despite the complexity of distinguishing between the different phases in the development of violence and conflict, the temporal dimension implies very different issues relative to education.

Nonetheless, beyond these differences, violence appears to be increasingly affecting society and education systems in general. The statistically observable physical manifestations of violence with regard to education systems (killing and/or abduction of students and teachers, destruction of infrastructure, enrolment of students as combatants) indicate the extent or scale of the problem. Such manifestations do not inform us on the more subtle longer-term impact on social development in terms of future survival and security. Examining violence in society is a deep soul-searching exercise that raises fundamental ethical and philosophical questions relative to human civilization that are beyond the scope of this report.

BEFORE THE CONFLICT

Education as a catalyst

Given the observation that children are increasingly involved in conflict, both as victims and as protagonists, and that many combatants involved in armed conflict today have had a significant exposure to formal education, it was thought appropriate to question the very role of education systems in conflict situations. Determining the extent to which educational policy choices and the nature of educational management systems explain or reflect the climate of political tension leading up to conflict is not an easy endeavour. There is a need to distinguish between education as an 'accomplice to rebellion' and to the outbreak of conflict, and education as a victim of violence and destruction when the origin of conflict lies elsewhere. A number of factors have been identified in considering the way in which education may contribute to the process of social and political disintegration that can result in violence and the outbreak of armed conflict.

Modernization and violence

Violence may be considered to be inherent to the process of modernization whereby social bonds are destroyed before other forms of social cohesion and socialization are built. This may

be seen with the 'breakdown of a caring society' in Sierra Leone, and the role of 'underground education' in Palestine during the uprising and in the current phase of nation-state building. The speed of change that characterizes recent social evolution in Colombia was also clearly associated with rising violence. Furthermore, the cases of Mozambique and Algeria clearly illustrate how the process of educational modernization creates new national identities by rejecting local traditional identities. In the case of Algeria, resistance to this process of educational modernization may be interpreted as being a struggle for the survival of traditions and constitutes a basic ingredient of fundamentalism. Becoming aware of the violent and often brutal nature of change and modernization would therefore help us understand and anticipate what is happening.

State schooling and community culture

Historically, modernization also involves the imposition of foreign schooling systems and alien cultures in many parts of the developing world. Based on the schooling model born in Europe in the nineteenth century, the content and organizational mode of schooling is still often unrepresentative of local or national cultures. As a result of foreign curricula and the use of foreign languages, schooling is an alienating factor in many parts of Africa today, creating a communication gap between the schooled and their parents and communities. Within current concerns to contextualize schooling, there is a need to bring the school back to the community. Schooling may either work toward a set of common values among different national communities, or toward reaching an understanding and acceptance of a plurality of interpretations.

Schooling then, is clearly an instrument of integration in the process of nation-state building, and may be conflictual in a situation of multicultural societies. It was recalled, however, that the experiences of nation-state building in the West are extremely variable. Regardless of how the notion of community is defined, a number of questions remain to be addressed. Are different types of 'community-schools' better adapted at the local level? Is there a balance that can be found between community-based modes of social organization and identification, and a minimal level of collective understanding and consensus at the national level? Is community-based social organization a necessary historical stage?

Frustration gap and economic inequities

The spread of mass schooling inherent to the process of modernization has considerably expanded access to formal education as well as to means of communication, thus creating new expectations and consumption needs. There appears to be a gap, however, between the scale of expansion of access to formal education and the pattern of growth of real incomes and employment possibilities. It is a paradox, for instance, that Latin America, which has relatively high levels of educational development at the macro-social level, is the region of the world with the most inequitable distribution of wealth. It is such differences between the distribution of formal education and the expectations that it gives rise to, and the distribution of wealth and real earning and consumption possibilities, which result in a 'frustration gap' that may, in the absence of appropriate mechanisms for the management of conflict, contribute to violence. This is sadly illustrated in the participation of 'forgotten aspirants' as combatants on both sides of the rebel war in Sierra Leone. If the assumption of a frustration gap is true, it raises fundamental questions relative to the implications of promoting the principle of the democratization of education or of Education For All (EFA), particularly in the absence of accompanying measures at the economic and political levels. Seeking to attain the principle of democratization of education leading to EFA must not only be accompanied by general policy measures, but also, and more specifically, by measures to ensure democracy for all.

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Weakened power of schooling as an agent of socialization

Education cannot be equated solely to schooling. Rather, the general concept encompasses a wide range of educational and socializing processes. These processes of socialization of children and youth are characterized by competition between the various agents of socialization such as the family, the school, the media, and so on. The media, and television in particular, are generally considered to be very powerful modes of socialization that may be in contradiction with the socializing efforts of family and formal schooling. Furthermore, the normative and violent values and behavioural patterns that youth acquire in street gangs in Colombia, for instance, clash with those transmitted at school. Street violence experienced by Palestinian youth during the uprising is also seen to erode the traditional normative authority of the elderly in general, and teachers in particular. The question is therefore not only to identify the sources of normative authority of the various agents of socialization (family, neighbourhood, school, media, street...) as well as the ways in which they are in competition, but also to determine how these various agents may be truly complementary in view of constituting a coherent and comprehensive educational process.

Local versus global educational cultures

It appears important not to restrict analysis to public schooling and to consider private schooling initiatives. This is particularly true within the context of economic globalization that is promoting a greater role for the private sector in education and training. More specifically, it may be appropriate to examine more closely the range of religious movements involved in educational initiatives in the context of the development of a global society. Although the separation of religion and state affairs may be seen as contributing to greater tolerance in certain contexts, the separation is not universal. What then is the role of religion in national education systems to be in a globalizing world and what room is there for the study of comparative religion?

Furthermore, globalization is questioning the very notion of territorial integrity on which nation-states are based. It is appropriate then to examine the impact of globalization particularly on societies that have not even begun building the nation-state concept. Moreover, globalization may also be seen as exacerbating political imbalances that would only invite violence. In considering educational recovery within the general context of globalization, is the focus to be on schooling in the (re)construction of the nation-state, and/or on community-based educational alternatives, and/or on modes of religious social organization? The nature of government and the extent of political participation of different components of civil society are fundamental issues that require close examination.

FROM EMERGENCIES TO RECONSTRUCTION

Apart from the important work done in the area of refugee education as a traditional component of emergency relief work, there appears to be a limited role for educational intervention in conflict situations. Education generally does not appear to be a high priority among the donor community in the emergency or immediate post-conflict stage, when food aid and health are generally considered to be higher priorities. It is important to recall that the lack of effective central authority structures in conflict zones render educational intervention strategies during emergencies very difficult, if not impossible. When donors do become involved with education in post-conflict situations, they tend to focus on the more visible rebuilding of physical infrastructure.

Refugee education

As a refugee-producing situation, emergencies may be viewed in three phases, from the initial emergency with the need to focus on the settlement of displaced persons, to that of 'care and maintenance' while awaiting a political solution, to that of the return home to the country of origin. As in other areas of intervention, it is now suggested that there should be a rapid educational response in newly-established refugee camps. The main principle is that children should quickly be brought together in group educational activities led by refugee teachers using the same language of instruction and core curriculum of the country or region of origin. The philosophy behind this is that as children have a right to education, refugee children have the right to their own education, at least in the early phases of an emergency. It is important to note, however, that not all governments are co-operative as was illustrated in the case of Rwandan refugees in eastern Zaire in the 1994 emergency. In prolonged emergencies, however, the Ministry of Education of the asylum country has the right to discuss appropriate curricula for refugee children.

Reconsidering the emergency-rehabilitation-development continuum

It is acknowledged that there is a general 'theoretical deficit' regarding the integration of components of sustainable development within relief and rehabilitation efforts in war-torn societies. This is further complicated by the fact that post-conflict phases cannot always be clearly identified, and situations may all too often be considered to be 'permanent emergencies'. In such cases, emergency intervention (preparedness) may have to be viewed as an integral part of development operations. The recent unfortunate re-emergence of violence in Sierra Leone is but one example of how the vision of a linear emergency-recovery-development continuum may seriously be questioned. More generally, given that chronic economic stress is continuing in nations currently in crisis, the notion of a linear development is further invalidated. Researchers and policy-makers consequently need to think of non-linear patterns of conflict development and bear in mind the potential re-emergence of conflict when planning intervention strategies.

Examining the wider political context

The process or recovery and reconstruction in disrupted societies requires a context of safety and security. Once in place, the definition of policy choices is intimately dependent on the nature of the cessation of armed conflict or the peace achieved. Traditionally, education has all too often been treated as a self-contained area detached from the wider political context. The importance of the broader political context in which educational development takes place is even more pronounced in the post-conflict stage. Educational policy-making in the context of uncertain peace and relative instability, as is currently the case in Palestine, can be a major challenge. Indeed, the contours of the categories of peace and conflict in periods of transition may be rather diffuse, as is the case in Sierra Leone.

Setting priorities for economic reconstruction

The mere scale of physical destruction and decimation of human life during the long years of warfare in Cambodia poses the dilemma of setting priorities in the post-conflict period. This is compounded by the sheer scale of urgent and specific social and economic needs of vulnerable and war-affected groups (physically disabled persons, widows, orphans) and the need to reintegrate demobilized soldiers. Moreover, the breakdown of public education systems during periods of prolonged conflict have an adverse impact on the general level of basic education of

the population. In cases of extensive destruction such as in Cambodia, massive external assistance is needed to rebuild a society that has been taken back decades in its social and economic development efforts. The complexity of the task of large-scale national reconstruction requires addressing short and long-term needs in a simultaneous fashion, both in education as opposed to other sectors of social development, as well as among various educational sub-sectors.

Combining short versus long-term strategies

Donor institutions and policy-makers have very short-term policy horizons to cope with the complexity and depth of the problems that exist. Moreover, the uncertainty of the political future in the case of Palestine, for example, is perceived as a major hindrance in the articulation of short and long-term objectives in the process of educational development being undertaken by the PNA.

Experiences in the reintegration of demobilized combatants and war-affected groups in Cambodia, Mozambique and Angola, for instance, point to the need to promote training for both short and long-term employment creation. Short-term employment creation has proven effective in the field of labour-intensive work programmes to rehabilitate basic infrastructure. Long-term training for employment, on the other hand, may be targeted to local needs as defined by labour market assessments and, when possible, by the building of labour market information systems. Given the need to quickly serve large numbers of former soldiers, as was the case in Bosnia, accelerated training for demobilized combatants has proven to be more appropriate than long-term training.

Bridging the gap between education, training and employment

High unemployment poses a threat to sustainable peace, particularly in post-conflict situations. In view of this, certain agencies are attempting to identify the types of skills needed for survival in post-conflict and to create a bridge between technical training and practical real employment possibilities. It is also increasingly felt that training must be linked to adult basic education and must not only focus on technical skills, but also on literacy, numeracy and other life skills. This is also clearly illustrated by the Cambodian government's decision to focus simultaneously on basic education and on vocational training.

The importance of non formal adult education and literacy programmes and the need to integrate life skills and basic adult education with technical training, is also echoed by NGOs involved in Sierra Leone and elsewhere in Africa. It must be recalled that the definition of basic education adopted at Jomtien included a wide range of skills and potential delivery systems that are not restricted to primary schooling. Furthermore, it can be argued that both education and employment, as basic rights, are prerequisites for peace and democracy.

Need for accelerated creative initiatives

Given the diversity and scale of educational and training needs, as well as financial and time constraints, it appears necessary to design creative interventions for recovery and reconstruction. It was pointed out, however, that the 'dependency syndrome' caused by (prolonged) emergency interventions leads to the disempowerment of communities thus making creative educational interventions very difficult in the post-conflict phase. The creative use of local resources has also proven to be more cost-effective than the traditional heavy investments of donor agencies in the reconstruction of training centres. Cambodia has adopted a policy whereby basic education is combined with vocational training based on local technologies.

Creative initiatives may also build upon community-based educational alternatives and grassroots experiences that develop during prolonged periods of crisis. Unfortunately, official recognition of non formal educational structures that may have played a crucial role in maintaining the delivery of education during conflict is not always forthcoming. This has largely been the case relative to the non-recognition, by educational authorities in a number of African countries, of semi-qualified and non-qualified teachers that continued providing basic education during periods of conflict. It may also be extended to the non-incorporation by Palestinian authorities of underground off-campus education that developed in the West Bank and Gaza in response to Israeli-imposed school closures. Finally, the case of educational reconstruction in Bosnia raises important questions as to why and how externally-designed, donor-driven strategies were imposed against the logic of effective local experiences. Indeed, Marshall Plan-type school construction programmes in post-conflict Bosnia were imposed in a context in which MoE-supported co-operative war-school efforts blending formal and non formal initiatives had proven successful.

PEACE EDUCATION

Peace education is both a tool of prevention and of social reconciliation. It appears crucial from the outset to clearly define what is meant by peace and what model of social coexistence is being envisaged in each specific context. Given that peace education, be it for preventive or reconciliatory purposes, is a long-term process which aims to modify behavioural patterns through changes in values and perceptions, it is crucial to determine how the time factor intervenes in differing conflict situations.

Cultures of peace

Peace education must be conceived beyond the narrow confines of schooling. It may be argued that schooling alone cannot have a major impact in promoting peace if it is not supported through other agents of socialization and communication such as the family and the media. Indeed, the struggle against violence must be sought at all levels including the media, the street, and daily behaviour. The impossibility of the schooling system to confront the phenomenon of violence alone was clearly illustrated in the case of societal violence in Colombia. In light of this observation, the promotion of cultures of peace may take the form of original initiatives such as twinning, and the creation of common youth centres in the context of the coexistence of two antagonistic communities (e.g. Bosnia).

Furthermore, in situations of insecurity and warfare, national schooling systems may be partly or completely dysfunctional. In light of this, it may be more appropriate to refer to the more encompassing notion of 'culture of peace' wherein a multiplicity of educational responses are to be employed. The media, and the radio in particular, are important channels of information dissemination and peace-building in post-conflict phases. Also, experiences in Burundi and Somalia offer concrete examples of recourse to local culture in promoting minimal norms of conduct in situations of violence through the innovative use of films, theatre and other art forms.

Conflict management and prevention

Considering that conflict is inherent to social dynamics, peace is not the absence of conflict. Rather, it is an operating mode wherein conflict is managed through non-violent means. This, however, requires justice and a legal participative framework to ensure the equal rights and opportunities of all citizens. If certain thresholds of violence that may be considered acceptable in a given society at a given time in its history, levels of violence that exceed this threshold are

clear indicators that something is amiss. Peace education must therefore seek to address the key issues that may be at the root of conflict.

Peace education as a instrument of political change

Although at a collective level, protagonists need to have equal status, individuals from antagonistic groups may be able to work together to initiate political change in view of establishing justice for all despite political inequalities that may exist between communities. Dynamics of peace must therefore be brought about or encouraged by harnessing motivated forces to provoke change. Peace education, however, remains superficial when there is no practical support or evidence of change on the ground. There has to be a minimal level of hope in the future on the part of those involved.

Evidence of such peace education operating in conflict situations may be illustrated by Palestinian-Israeli co-operation relative to the setting up of community-based educational alternatives during the period of school closures characteristic of the Intifada period. The lessons learnt from such experiences are that for peace education to be effective, it is essential that i) it be promoted by motivated individuals and groups, and ii) that protagonists be involved in the design and implementation of programmes. It has been shown that peace education does not require substantial financial resources. Beyond bold expressions of intent on the international level, however, the only meaningful experiences in this respect are small grassroots experiences.

Social reconciliation

Education (together with other systems) may help define the nature of the new society to be rebuilt. Education may also serve to depoliticize and 'heal the wounds' of conflict. It is true that the qualitative impact of destruction on culture and mentalities or the extent of the 'cultural fracture' in cases similar to that of Cambodia are difficult to assess. Nevertheless, the introduction of history of the war in primary school curricula in Cambodia is a good example of an attempt to confront the experience of war and heal emotional wounds. In a similar vein, there is a collaborative examination of the way in which the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is presented in the school curricula of both nations. Redesigning curricula for such endeavour implies addressing emotional and non-cognitive components such as social representations of the other. Within the context of social reconciliation on which national reconstruction efforts depend, there is a need to constitute a mechanism of dialogue between different parties to seek the main partners for a community-based agreement on a national education plan.

'A window of opportunity'

Broad definitions of the content and organization of education systems were largely imposed during the historical construction process of the nation-state. Post-crisis reconstruction may indeed be perceived as a 'window of opportunity' on condition that there is genuine negotiation and consultation between protagonists regarding education as a process of socialization. At a more local level, peace education may be seen as having the potential of contributing to survival and sustainable participative development. Indeed, evidence from Sierra Leone suggests that many organizations working in the area of peace education do not define the outcome of their efforts as 'peace', but rather, as 'empowerment' at the local and community level or as 'awareness' of rights, opportunities, and obligations.

Co-ordinating international aid

Various initiatives on inter-agency collaboration in a number of educational sub-sectors point to the fact that the lack of co-ordination is being taken more seriously. Although it is agreed that aid co-ordination in general within the donor community has come a long way over the past ten to fifteen years, important gaps persist in the field of aid to education in emergencies and conflict situations. Although much is currently being done in the area of peace education in Sierra Leone, for example, there is very little evidence of co-ordination and intervention strategies appear to be implemented in a chaotic fashion. It is also to be recalled that peace is a political issue. Consequently, there may be tension between information acquisition and dissemination, as well as competition among NGOs for funding. Although there is some evidence elsewhere of effective strategic linkages being made among agencies and between certain agencies and NGOs, it is acknowledged that efforts to share experiences and information must be urgently and significantly developed.

As aid is usually dictated by donor countries based on specific political motivations, it is crucial that recipient countries be empowered to co-ordinate aid. Regular sectorial meetings that bring together national authorities and donors for the sharing and dissemination of information about on-going programmes being implemented in Palestine, is an example of such an initiative from the part of the 'recipient' or partner country. Also, the attempt to initiate education sector studies conducted by national teams involving agencies, national researchers and government, as is currently the case in Zimbabwe, is an illustration of this process of empowerment.

THE POTENTIAL ROLE OF RESEARCH

Preliminary comments

Researching issues relative to education and conflict situations requires a sound knowledge of the general context within which societal violence develops. Documenting the extent and causes of violence in society at large therefore constitute the necessary first steps in exploring the role of formal education in the development of conflicts.

Documenting the magnitude of violence in society

It is now generally assumed that violence and armed conflict are becoming more widespread. A necessary starting point would be to document the more visible manifestations of violence in a given region within a given time frame in order to trace the pattern of development of violence in society so as to confirm the basic assumption.

Analyzing the root causes of violence

If it is true that levels of violence are rising and that armed conflict is becoming more widespread, it would be urgent to seek a better understanding of the underlying causes, not only of the open manifestations of violence, but also of 'hidden' or 'silent' violence. Moreover, a number of the factors which have been identified as catalysts, such as knowledge gaps and the absence of basic rights, exist in countries where wide-scale violence has not developed. In attempting to identify the root causes of the outbreak of violence and conflict, it may then be appropriate to look into situations where violence has not erupted. In the same vein, rather than seek to understand why certain individuals or groups are violent, the more appropriate question may be to determine why others are not. What context-specific mechanisms allow for the non-violent resolution of social and political conflicts?

Designing a conceptual framework

The complexity of issues relative to education in disrupted societies reiterates the need for research. Such research, however, needs prioritizing and should be of practical use for policy-makers and practitioners. An adequate conceptual framework is needed to establish a typology of situations and it may be useful to distinguish between the various issues in question at the macro, meso and micro levels. Identifying the relative weight of such issues at the different levels and during the various phases in the development of conflicts, may prove useful in informing intervention strategies on the choice of local partners and the appropriateness of delivery systems to be employed.

Exploring psychological dimensions

The psychological impact of exposure to and participation in violence during the formative years of childhood and adolescence need to be reconsidered and further researched. What effects do these changes have on the impact of normative authority that various educational processes are invested with?

Developing early-warning systems

It is important to monitor what is being conveyed by the school system and its potential implications. To what extent can measurable indicators be developed as early warning signals?

Education systems as arenas for conflict

What lessons can be drawn from the extent and nature of educational destruction during periods of conflict? What does the intentional targeting of education systems (i.e. the adoption of strategies to disrupt educational processes and/or to destroy the state educational model and its products) by armed forces signify?

Documenting international commitment

Since the importance of addressing 'education in emergencies' figured in the Jomtien Declaration (1990) and was re-iterated in the Amman Affirmation (1996), what evidence is available that there has indeed been a shift in budget allocations both for intervention and research? To what extent are international agencies taking the issue seriously?

Assessing the impact of intervention strategies

There appears to be a need for impact analyses relative to emergency and post-conflict intervention. This would lead to a critical reassessment of the basic theoretical assumptions on which various intervention strategies are founded. Given the sensitivity of the topic, collaborative assessment between researchers, policy-makers, and practitioners from universities, international agencies and NGOs, was seen as the appropriate type of constituency to provide the necessary degree of detachment needed for such assessment.

CHAPTER III

Reflections on Sierra Leone: a case study

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INTRODUCTION

The current spate of civil conflicts and slide into anarchy that has engulfed so many African countries raises grave doubts about the future of such nation states. It has resulted in a wasteful reversal of so much that these countries have achieved in pursuit of development, and calls into question the very survival of the state as a cohesive entity. Beyond the economic loss and physical destruction of war, it is the moral void of what is 'normal' and the naked impotence of rationality which convey such a chilling sense of the 'fading future'[1] faced by these disrupted states.

When civil society degenerates into anarchy and traditional norms and values are superseded by explosive violence, the significance of education as an instrument for socialization and development ought to come under close scrutiny. The trauma of indiscriminate violence and wanton destruction which characterises civil wars always raises soul-searching questions of what went wrong and how this could happen. However, it is not often that such questioning leads to an objective re-examination of education in terms of its possible role and contribution to war/peace. There has been some concern with the disruptive effect of war on education in Africa. Such concern has tended to be over 'interruptions' imposed on the normative process, instead of a more fundamental concern over the role and purpose of education as an arena of conflicting values and expectations in society. Consequently, opportunities to learn critical lessons which may be essential for re-construction tend to be easily squandered in favour of a return to 'normally'.

Education is invariably rightly perceived as an important part of the reconstruction process in disrupted states. Without very serious and critical re-examination of the role and purpose of education however, re-construction might simply entail a stronger dose of the same old stuff, or panic innovations reflecting some ideology which emerged as dominant from the civil conflict.

Civil war broke out in the West African state of Sierra Leone in 1991. This paper explores the 'role' of education in precipitating the circumstances leading to civil war, highlights the impact of war on education, and envisages possible contributions of education to the process of reconstruction. Sierra Leoneans have been very perplexed by the persistence of the war over the past five years. It has festered on, despite a military coup in 1992 (which ousted the government against which the war was launched), and despite internationally-observed elections in 1996 which ended military rule in favour of a democratic civilian government. This paper seeks to aid the soul-searching process as peace draws near.

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[1] Hiller, Ralph M., 'The fading future', *Comparative education review*, vol. 31, no. 2, May 1987.

It is an onerous task to trace the stages leading to a society's slide into anarchy. There are risks of simplistic explanations, and sound judgement on controversial issues can only be made in the fullness of time. Nevertheless, it is critical to attempt to chart Sierra Leone's slide into the type of latent anarchy that culminated in civil war. This is essential for understanding what went wrong, and is also of great practical and therapeutic value on the long road to social recovery and national reconstruction.

On reflection, there are at least six major areas in which trends pointed to an ultimate threat of civil strife. These need to be briefly outlined as a framework for understanding the possible role of education as an accomplice to rebellion in Sierra Leone.

Dictatorial tendencies

Sierra Leoneans have inadvertently tended to make dictatorships of their governments. This may be due in part to local tradition which espouses great respect for authority. It is more likely, however, to be an inevitable consequence of orchestrated 'praise singing' and sycophancy which rapidly become the norm as interest groups compete for influence and favour with each new government. This tendency is ironic, since Sierra Leoneans are also known to be perennial critics of their governments.

Since independence in 1961, most governments have exploited their initial popularity, and its attendant climate of sycophancy, to ensure political domination over their opponents. This has been done typically through suppression of democratic institutions[2], erosion of civil rights and denial of justice. Once a government approaches full-fledged dictatorship however the erstwhile praise singers tend to become fierce critics seeking the downfall of the regime. At best, this strange dialectic has been retrogressive in terms of development efforts, and it has now also proved to be a harbinger of civil chaos.

Economic inequalities

Like most independent African states, Sierra Leone has failed to grapple with the deep structural inequalities institutionalised in economic relations during the colonial era. The machinery of colonial regimes was designed primarily to exploit the natural wealth and productive labour of the colony for the benefit of the metropole. In much the same way national governments used this inherited machinery to monopolize Sierra Leone's natural wealth and productive labour ostensibly to promote national development.

Increasingly, however, such resources came to be used largely to finance the operations of an ever-expanding bureaucracy, at the expense of the majority of citizens who are outside the machinery of government. Consequently, although successive national regimes pursued laudable development plans, wealth distribution remained fundamentally flawed, as deep structural inequalities were never seriously challenged. For instance, agriculture remained unduly skewed towards export crop production to the detriment of food self-sufficiency for the local population. Moreover, marketing of these export crops was the responsibility of a quasi-government monopoly, which continued to pay unfairly low producer prices to farmers until recent intervention by IMF/World Bank structural adjustment measures.

In the mining sector too, marketing of diamonds was controlled by a quasi-government

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[2] Absence of a free press and compromising the judiciary are the main indicators of this type of suppression. c.f.: Cole, Bernadette. *Mass media, freedom and democracy in Sierra Leone*. Premier Publishing House, Freetown, Sierra Leone, 1995.

monopoly, and concessions for other mineral resources were granted predominantly to foreign companies with weak linkages into the local economy. Industrialization has also been a facade with low impact on income and wealth distribution.

Generally, persistent inequalities have resulted in deepening poverty for the majority of citizens, especially in rural areas. This has given some credence to flippant cynics who argue that countries like Sierra Leone have been: 'sucked dry by robber elites who ruled from the capital and made deals with foreign countries and companies. The countryside was ignored or exploited.'[3]

Mismanagement and corruption

Where national wealth is not distributed fairly, citizens usually depend on some system of patronage to channel resources in their direction. For Sierra Leone, like many African countries, this has meant that those in political power and high office are under strong pressure to channel national resources for the benefit of relatives, friends, kinspeople and constituents. This in turn has given rise to mismanagement and corruption on a scale that has brought a richly-endowed nation close to bankruptcy.

Although institutionalised corruption sometimes facilitates state resources to trickle down to the poor, it has mainly served to accentuate their dependence on the rich and powerful who are the main beneficiaries of endemic corruption. This has resulted in a cruel irony whereby the poor are reluctant to protest against corruption, for fear that the trickle of resources which flows in their direction might be turned off!

Ethnic divisiveness

In relative terms Sierra Leone does not have a serious problem of naked ethnic conflict. However, ethnic divisions are a factor in the social tensions which have haunted development efforts. These divisions are usually manipulated by those wishing to use ethnicity as a power base for dominating others, or as a rallying point to protect their people from domination by others, or even as a vehicle for avenging past exploitation of their group. Such ideological uses of ethnicity have undermined the cohesiveness of the state, and should ultimately be seen as a contributing factor to the current civil turmoil.

Lack of transparency and accountability

Dictatorship and corruption engender lack of transparency and accountability in the conduct of government business. The usual checks and balances on the exercize of power are rendered impotent, and replaced by a clique of power brokers who quickly institute a system of patronage. This is not peculiar to Sierra Leone, and should not be dismissed as mere political/economic corruption. It is the result of juxtaposing traditional-authoritarian forms of government (chieftaincies), with the modern-democratic state and its rules for exercising power.

At independence, the Sierra Leone People's Party government (SLPP) operated in a relatively democratic climate, with a multi-party system, active press and vibrant parliament ensuring adequate transparency and accountability. When the first prime minister Sir Milton Margai died, he was succeeded (against the odds) by his brother Sir Albert Margai, who needed to consolidate his hold on power. This produced an ethnic stranglehold on political power by the Mende tribe, and alienated other ethnic groups from the government, eventually

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[3] Sierra Leone: Vote to nowhere, *The economist*, 2 March 1996, p. 62.

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leading to its downfall. The military then intervened for several years!

The civilian government which came after the Margais attempted not only to consolidate its hold on power, but also to eliminate all opposition parties through the introduction of a one-party state. Despite its initial popularity, the one-party government of the All People's Congress party (APC) presided over almost twenty-five years of dictatorship, corruption and mismanagement. Such institutionalised corruption, coupled with a naked lack of transparency and accountability presented a 'join us or perish' ultimatum to most Sierra Leoneans. This period of APC rule thus witnessed substantial brain drain which led to the near-collapse of a once-efficient civil service, and undermined the fledgling professional class which was so critical for development.

As this regime approached its 'twilight years', Sierra Leoneans found themselves embroiled in a strange civil war. Initially, it was assumed by many that the war was simply an encroachment from the carnage in neighbouring Liberia. It soon became clear that this was a home-spun conflict rather than a mere spillover from a turbulent neighbour. Years of corrupt, dictatorial one-party rule had culminated in a ground-swell of discontent that fuelled the rebel war, once it got started by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel movement.

Exploiting a culture of silence

Successive governments got away with corruption and dictatorial practices because of the 'culture of silence' in Sierra Leone.[4] There is a tradition of avoiding conflict through negotiation and compromise. This is a very strong ethical orientation amongst the older generation, and it often leads to hypocrisy and duplicity in attempts to settle intractable social/political conflicts. In general, it is fair to say that Sierra Leoneans have a deserved reputation of being peace-loving and 'civilised' in coping with the tensions and conflicts which characterize all modern nation states. However, irreverent youths have often warned that being peace-loving can easily degenerate into being 'piss-loving' which only leads to the gutter! They point out that this culture of silence has enabled successive governments and politicians to prolong the agony of a long-suffering people!

EDUCATION AS AN ACCOMPLICE TO REBELLION

It is well known that education is a dual weapon which can serve the cause of domination and oppression as effectively as it can advance the cause of liberation and freedom. What is often less well understood is that inadvertent consequences and unintended outcomes of education can negate the best intentions and plans. It is the contention of this paper that in quite unintended ways, education in Sierra Leone has been an accomplice in creating the climate of rebellion which culminated in civil war. The case for this contention is sketched out through the examples below.

Inequities in provision and quality

The growth of modern education in Sierra Leone reflects patterns of inequality that are characteristic of most African countries. Provision during the colonial era was somewhat grudging and was made mainly by benevolent religious bodies rather than colonial regimes. This was followed by a period of rapid expansion after independence, when the national government placed a high premium on education as a vital instrument for modernization.

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[4] For an account of this culture of silence, see for instance: Squire, C.B. *Agony in Sierra Leone*, CBS/Computech Services, Freetown, Sierra Leone, 1996; Squire, C.B. *Ill-fated nation?*, CBS/Computech Services, Freetown, Sierra Leone, 1995.

Despite the commendable achievements in expansion of provision, inequalities persisted as governments tended to favour groups and regions which constitute their power base.

Against this background there has always been controversy and tension over equitable access and participation in an education system that is heavily dependent on public financing. Promises of more schools are commonplace in election manifestos, but are not always translated into concrete reality. The distribution of facilities under internationally-funded education projects has been used by politicians to gain favour in their constituencies. Significantly also, since new schools are often established out of political expediency rather than as an outcome of educational planning, standards declined as a whole. In short, there has been a failure to meet expectations regarding access to education, as well as on the quality.

Elitism and the forgotten aspirants

Sierra Leone has never had a truly mass system of education, but has taken pride in the achievements of a minority fortunate to have access to quality education. It was known as the 'Athens' of West Africa, with Fourah Bay College being established in 1827 as the main institution of higher learning in the sub-region.

In spite of this long affinity with modern education and the expansion of the formal education system over the years, the national enrolment ratio in Sierra Leone has always been low. Persistence within the system has also been relatively weak. Consequently, only a small percentage of the eligible age-group have access to education. For those fortunate enough to start school, most drop out by the end of primary, and less than 1% make it beyond secondary.

Sierra Leone therefore has an elitist system of education. But this elitism is not based purely on wealth or social class, since political patronage plays a major role in any publicly-financed system of education. Educational 'elites' therefore tend to come from different social, economic and ethnic groups, although some are more prone to elitism than others! Educational elitism is thus relatively open, but this does not guarantee that it is any more palatable or tolerable for those who are left out.

Education in Sierra Leone is also elitist in terms of its narrow academic curriculum which has had more to do with aping western culture and values than promoting knowledge, skills, and attitudes for a modern and independent African state. Although some progress has been made over the years relative to the diversification of the curriculum, there is still a measure of alienation for most learners in the system. Until recently also, the curriculum has made little provision for recognising and rewarding non-academic competencies. Success has been too narrowly defined!

Arguably, the most negative aspect of Sierra Leone's elitist system of education has to do with a complete failure to cater for those who do not make it within the system. School drop-outs are simply not provided for in any serious or meaningful way. Thus, those who do not survive and rise to the top of this narrow and competitive system simply become the 'forgotten aspirants' in a very elitist educational process.

In situations where only a tiny minority can get a complete and reasonable quality education, the price of ignorance weighs more heavily on those who have had some schooling, than on those who never had access to school. This creates considerable frustration in the semi-schooled population of 'forgotten aspirants', which in turn could serve as a time-bomb waiting to explode. It is not surprising therefore to find 'forgotten aspirants' playing a role as combatants on both sides of the rebel war in Sierra Leone. 'War enables young people to live by the gun, and to live better. Looting is far more profitable than waiting half-educated for a job that will never come. So the young joined up—rebel army or government army, no matter—in their thousands.'[5]

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[5] Sierra Leone: Vote to nowhere, *The economist*, 2 March 1996, p. 62.

Inadvertent delusions and unrealistic expectations

Because of the demonstrated impact of education in promoting social mobility in newly independent Sierra Leone, wrong signals have been sent to subsequent generations. This has given rise to unrealistic expectations about what can be achieved by virtue of mere school attendance and certification per se. At independence in 1961, the drive for indigenization meant that nationals with little more than secondary level qualifications were catapulted to top positions. Later, the new and expanding population of university graduates were guaranteed high level jobs regardless of specialization. Most secondary school graduates could also be certain of reasonable jobs within the public sector, as well as in the private sector.

When economic growth and job creation began to lag behind output of universities and schools, reality dictated that educational qualifications per se could no longer be a guarantee of any job, much less top level jobs. Unfortunately, expectations continued to fly in the face of this new reality. The belief that schooling leads to good jobs could not be questioned. Hence a strong sense of delusion persisted amongst learners that society owes them something once they have gone through the education system.

Conformity and subservience

Even at the height of its academic excellence, education in Sierra Leone tended to produce 'clever conformists' rather than 'daring innovators'. This has much to do with the ethics and moral values predominant within the education system, as reflected in popular maxims such as: 'Obey now and Complain later', 'Labour and expect' ;'Learning is better than silver and gold'; 'Education is the key to success in life'; etc.

In principle most of these maxims reflect reasonable moral values which can help to build character. Taken to extremes however they can become oppressive and archaic, and so do much harm to young minds which should be questioning and innovative.

In practice, such maxims have helped to create an ethos in which obedient conformity is rewarded, whilst any deviant innovation is punished. Encapsulated in this ethos is a culture of schooling in which teachers know best; school rules exist for the good of pupils and should not be flouted; deference must always be shown to those who 'know better'; respect for those in authority should be maintained at all times; knowledge is there to be acquired, not to be challenged; knowing answers is more important than asking questions; etc.

Against this background, it is hardly surprising that in Sierra Leone society people tend to be judged or valued more by their qualifications than by their actual job performance. Position or office held tends to be more important than discharge of duty or accomplishments. There is strong reluctance to question authority or deviate from the status-quo in most matters. The roots of the sycophancy problem run deep within the education system!

The counter-balance to this has been the emergence of a culture of 'youthful irreverence', particularly amongst the 'forgotten aspirants' who have little to lose by flouting authority. This trend has become fashionable, resulting in a widening generation gap that is part of a recipe for social violence in the country!

Unfulfilled promises

Nation-States lose integrity when citizens cease to be convinced that the nation is worth making sacrifices for, or that there is much to aspire to in the state. This underlies the new disturbing trend of Sierra Leoneans 'deserting' their country!

It used to be that young Sierra Leoneans who went abroad did so to gain further

education. As young people became disillusioned over lack of opportunities and what they regard as a betrayal by their own society, the trend shifted to travelling abroad as a survival mechanism. The emphasis was no longer on further studies but on seeking a better life in a land of greater opportunities. There was no hurry to return home with hard-won laurels. Those who did return were either on ego-boosting visits to show how successful they had become abroad, or in search of high office to which they felt entitled by virtue of their long stay abroad. The 'off-to-America' phenomenon is a strong indictment against the unfulfilled promises of an elitist education system!

PRECURSORS TO A CIVIL WAR

Contrary to what Sierra Leoneans may choose to believe, civil wars do not simply break out to everyone's surprise. There are usually pre-cursors to be discerned by those who are perceptive enough, and indeed there had been rumours of war as avenues for peaceful change became inaccessible under a one-party dictatorship. With the benefit of hindsight, some of the main pre-cursors of civil war in Sierra Leone are suggested in brief outline below.

Resignation to the 'Fear of freedom'

Peaceful acquiescence in the face of oppression can be deceptive. Sierra Leoneans can be faulted for acquiescing to suppression and dictatorship from successive governments, because of a fatalist attitude which borders on fear of freedom. In the midst of gross violations of human rights, naked corruption and dictatorship, it has never proved easy to arouse Sierra Leoneans to resist or protest against the powers that be. Instead, there has always been a tendency to pray for deliverance, and be resigned to their fate whilst awaiting such divine intervention.

However, such resignation to the fear of freedom does not mean that there is a lack of awareness or deep sense of resentment about what is going on in society. It is simply that people are bidding their time and waiting for the opportunity to avenge the violations of their rights.

Thus, when the civil war first broke out, there was considerable ambivalence amongst Sierra Leoneans about supporting a corrupt and dictatorial government against the rebel forces. However, the destruction and traumatic loss of life which was going on in neighbouring Liberia at the time, persuaded most Sierra Leoneans that, on balance, it was better to support the bad government which they knew, rather than an invading rebel force which was unknown.

Youthful irreverence and naked emperors

Powerful figures in Sierra Leone always seem to have a problem in dealing with youthful irreverence. A prime minister who was constantly heckled about thieving by school children resorted to trading insults with them, and this eventually degenerated into stone-throwing at his motorcade. A president faced with school and college boycotts by students protesting against corruption, tried sending in the riot squad. This brought out parents who challenged the squad to shoot them in place of the children. The president resorted to late night radio broadcasts appealing to parents to plead with their children to return to school.

These examples vividly illustrate how youthful irreverence can expose the impotence of seemingly all-powerful rulers. It came as no surprise then that the one-party dictatorship of the APC government was eventually overthrown, not by the rebel war, but by a group of young army officers (all in their twenties)! These men had travelled from the war front to complain about non-payment of salaries, but were rebuffed by the government. Believing that they were in serious trouble over their protest, these officers gambled all on a military coup. The

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government then discovered the hard truth which always comes late to dictatorships. Instead of the support which they presumed they had within the military and the population at large, there was widespread euphoria and jubilation over the coup, with the young officers being hailed as national heroes and saviours!

Political arrogance and fatal errors

Dictatorships often delude themselves about the extent to which they are in control of the situation in a country. This naturally gives rise to a certain degree of political arrogance which often manifests itself in lack of accountability and intolerance to any form of criticism.

Paradoxically, such political arrogance can also be the source of a regime's downfall, as it could encourage fatal errors. The APC government was so confident of its hold on power under its one-party dictatorship, that it initially dismissed the rebel war out of hand. War resources were then mismanaged to the extent that the army was not being paid in the midst of a civil war! Even when a group of young officers travelled from the war front to the capital to protest about non-payment of salaries, they were dismissed as 'malcontents'. They promptly went on to stage a military coup which bundled the APC regime out of office and sent powerful figures scurrying abroad for refuge.

Breakdown of a caring society

Arguably, the most powerful signal of an impending civil strife in Sierra Leone is the breakdown of a caring society. Traditional values and extended family systems ensured a safety net for the weak and vulnerable in society. This, however, was steadily eroded by greed, exploitation, manipulation and indifference to the fate of the less fortunate. Conspicuous consumption of ill-gotten gain replaced a charitable spirit of sharing. Blatant profiteering in the most basic and essential goods and services became the order of the day, irrespective of the life-threatening consequences for the poor and disadvantaged in society.

Without any form of safety net the poor and disadvantaged must cope with life as best they can. In turn they have no reason to be supportive or even well-meaning towards the privileged and powerful in society. The smouldering resentment resulting from such developments creates social tensions, and serves as a basis for explosive violence when the time is ripe.

IMPACT OF CIVIL WAR ON EDUCATION

In Sierra Leone the impact of civil war on education goes well beyond being 'caught in the cross-fire'. Evidence suggests that far from being a casual victim of circumstances, education has been purposely and persistently targeted as an instrument of war as well as an arena for battle.

Destruction of physical facilities

In every town or major settlement attacked during the rebel war, schools have been vandalised and destroyed for no obvious reason. Health centres are looted for medical supplies, industries and shops are also looted for goods and private homes are looted for property. In the case of schools, there is usually no attempt to loot anything. It often seems to be a case of wanton destruction!

The most serious cases of destruction to educational institutions are the Bunumbu Teacher's College and Njala University College. Bunumbu received substantial international funding in the late 1970s and early 80s, under an innovative project for preparing a new breed

of primary school teachers for the rural areas. The college produced teachers who were also animators, and resource persons for rural development. Bunumbu Teachers College became world famous for this innovative teacher education programme. It was one of the first educational institutions attacked and taken over by the rebels in the early stages of the war. When the area was finally liberated by government forces the destruction which had been done to Bunumbu College was so complete that observers remarked that: 'Whoever did this, wanted to make sure that nothing called education could ever take place here again.'

Njala University College is one of the constituent colleges of the university of Sierra Leone, and is located fairly close to the capital Freetown. The initial rebel attack on Njala was swift and brutal, forcing most staff and students to abandon the college for safer locations. It was felt that this was only a temporary setback, and that the college would return to normal given a measure of protection from government troops. However, every time plans were made to re-open the college, rebels re-visited and caused further destruction. Njala has been attacked at least three times to prevent it from re-opening, and the damage done has ensured that it will take much time and finances to make it operational again as a university college.

In the case of Fourah Bay College which is the longer established constituent college of the university, its location in the heart of the capital has made it difficult for the rebels to attack it. However, this has not prevented serious threats from being made against the college. On several occasions an ultimatum was sent to staff and students to abandon their educational pursuits or face dire consequences. Indeed, on at least one such occasion, the college was partially evacuated for fear of an imminent rebel attack. Thus, although Fourah Bay College has not been attacked, its academic programme has been disrupted by a climate of fear and uncertainty.

Apart from these tertiary level institutions, many secondary schools outside of the capital and major towns have also been destroyed by rebels. Prominent amongst these is the Harford Secondary School for Girls, located in Moyamba in the Southern Province. This is a leading girls' school which has produced many eminent women in Sierra Leone society. Staff and students were forced to flee the school and take refuge in safer locations. There are also cases in which rebel attacks on schools have been reportedly led by ex-pupils who have joined the rebel movement. In one such case in Kambia District in the Northern Province, a large number of pupils (especially young girls) were abducted by the rebels and have now been held hostage for almost two years.

Generally, as a result of these rebel attacks on educational institutions, the internally displaced population includes a significant proportion of pupils and teachers. This has made it quite difficult to ascertain basic enrolment and related data for the education system.

Abduction of staff and students

It is the practice of the RUF rebel movement to abduct staff and students from educational institutions which are attacked. This, however, is an issue which is clouded in some controversy. There are allegations that although some staff and students are indeed abducted, many also join the RUF of their own free will. It is not clear why these young people should want to exchange present life in their homes for a precarious existence in the bush as part of a rebel movement. What is clear however is that the RUF movement does have a medical doctor, several engineers and an unusually high proportion of ex-teachers and ex-students in its ranks! It is indeed one of the most cruel ironies of the rebel war that as the nation turns in on itself in conflict, so much of its useful human resource is being used to destroy so much that has been achieved in the past. Questions need to be raised about the long-term impact of this phenomenon. What happens if and when these ex-teachers and ex-students become re-integrated into society? What kinds of values and expectations will they bring with them, and how will/should society respond?

Challenging educational philosophy and goals

The rebel war has posed serious challenges to the philosophy and goals which appear to be espoused by the current education system in Sierra Leone. Firstly, the RUF leadership has always maintained that the people it is alleged to have abducted have actually been liberated, and decided to stay of their own free will after being 'conscientized'. This, of course, is akin to the kind of political re-education which one associates with totalitarian regimes and the treatment reserved for dissidents. However, the point the RUF seems to be making is that in a nation plagued with corruption, greed, and injustice, people need to be taught the discipline of making do with available resources (in the bush), the virtues of sharing with others, and the responsibility of caring for others. Although such claims from a rebel movement which has committed so much of the atrocities against innocent civilians ring very hollow, there can be no mistaking the indictment against an education system which has apparently failed to transmit these virtues.

Moreover, the unfortunate circumstances of civil war gave many young people a new sense of worth for the very first time in their lives. The power behind a gun has meant that many young people who had been confined to the fringes of society were now thrust into centre stage as rebel fighters or new recruits into the government army. What many failed to achieve through the process of schooling was now being realised as society looked up to them to determine the outcome of civil strife. Under the military government some of these young people found themselves holding positions of responsibility and decision making in the country. All of this has cast serious doubt on the old notion of education as the main route to social mobility. Many young people are now questioning the value and virtues of what the education system in Sierra Leone is really about.

Thirdly, there appears to be a paradoxical love-hate relationship with education as far as the rebel movement is concerned. One of the few explicit demands made so far by the RUF leadership is for 'free education', as part of the changes they wish to see in a new Sierra Leone. Similarly, a desire for education and training has been the top priority expressed by young rebel fighters who are being re-habilitated following their surrender or capture in battle. Such demands are extremely significant coming from those who have spent so much of their time and effort in the systematic destruction of educational institutions. At the very least they indicate deep resentment of the elitist philosophy in education, which has excluded so many from the benefits of schooling. There is also a case for re-examining what education stands for and how it can be more inclusive in terms of recognising and rewarding a wider range of abilities and talents for nation-building.

COPING MECHANISMS FOR RECOVERY

Schooling is an essential part of the rhythm of normal society. Hence making schools functional can be critical to recovery in war-torn societies. It is therefore not surprising that measures taken to effect recovery and re-habilitation in war-torn Sierra Leone include a significant level of educational intervention. Examples of these intervention measures are outlined below.

Re-location of institutions

Sierra Leoneans have shown a dogged determination to continue with the educational process in the face of destruction caused by the rebel war. One of the most successful strategies adopted in this regard is the re-location of educational institutions affected by the war. Thus, Bunumbu College has been re-located to Kenema which is the headquarter town of the eastern province. The college shares facilities with a technical institute in the town, and the hope is

that it can be more readily defended within such a major location. Similarly, Njala University College has been re-located to Freetown where it has temporary facilities that are scattered across a wide range of premises from the east to the west of the city. Harford Secondary School for Girls is also now in Freetown, as are several other institutions.

Conditions are far from satisfactory for any of these re-located institutions, but the way in which schooling has been kept alive is undoubtedly a major success story in thwarting rebel attempts to destroy education. In this regard Sierra Leoneans have had to re-discover the kind of strength offered by their traditional extended family system and community care. It is remarkable that all staff and students of these re-located institutions have been able to find shelter and support from relatives and friends in Freetown, Bo or Kenema whilst they continue with their education.

Absorption of displaced pupils in existing schools

Naturally, it was not possible to re-locate all those schools destroyed by the rebel war. Even in some cases where schools were not destroyed, the level of insecurity forced whole populations including teachers, students and parents to flee to safer areas. Thus major cities such as Freetown, Bo and Kenema became host to an expanding population of displaced pupils. The strategy used to deal with this problem was to absorb displaced secondary level pupils into existing schools in the major cities. Again this was very successful, with some of the most prestigious schools having to take in pupils from what would be considered very sub-standard schools. Some of the host schools were provided with additional classroom blocks to absorb extra numbers, and almost all moved to a double shift operation. This strategy generally involved the co-operation of school principals and the Ministry of Education to ensure that these displaced children continue with schooling.

Opening of new schools for displaced and refugees

Another strategy that was successfully used was to open new schools for displaced pupils. This was used mainly to deal with primary level pupils, and the initiative was taken largely by local religious bodies, NGOs and private organizations. One of the more remarkable new institutions to emerge from this type of initiative is the FAWE (Forum of African Women Educators) school which caters for displaced girls in Freetown.

De-mobilization of child combatants

Unfortunately not all children could be catered for through the strategies described above. In a sense, displaced children were the lucky ones, since many others were in fact active combatants within both rebel and government forces. UNICEF took the lead in an initiative to ensure the de-mobilization of child combatants from both sides of the conflict. This type of intervention helps to minimize the damage done to young people and offers them new hope.

De-traumatization for Children Affected by War (CAW)

UNICEF again took the lead in establishing a programme to deal with the problems faced by 'Children Affected by the War'. This category includes ex-child-combatants as well as children who have witnessed or been subjected to atrocities during the war. Measures taken to help these children include de-traumatization as well as counselling, education and training. In spite of all these laudable interventions, it needs to be emphasised that there are still unacceptably high numbers of children in the streets of the big cities, who have simply fallen between the cracks of these coping mechanisms.

A NOTE OF CAUTION

Despite their unquestionable benefits there are risks associated with coping mechanisms in disrupted states like Sierra Leone. In a sense, coping mechanisms are essentially about survival rather than development. There is therefore the danger of being closely bound by these mechanisms, and not being able to switch from a survival mode to a development mode. Already there is a growing cadre of functionaries involved with aid agencies in planning and implementing coping mechanisms. Interests are being canvassed and hierarchies created, so that in effect these coping mechanisms have virtually taken on a life of their own outside the normal system. It can even be argued that in some instances continued dependency is being actively fostered to ensure that the new functionaries maintain their hold on other people's lives, in the name of national recovery and reconstruction!

On the part of the beneficiaries there is a danger of failing to look beyond the period of assistance by others. Many displaced children currently receive substantial assistance in the special schools which are supposed to be a temporary arrangement. Some must be wondering whether it makes sense to go back to their old resource-starved schools and deprived home conditions once the war is over. On the other hand there are many displaced children living in appalling conditions, who can hardly wait to get back to the security and relative comfort of their own homes and communities.

If coping mechanisms are treated as self-justifying ends in themselves, this can only breed a culture of dependency which will make matters worse for education in the long term. On the other hand, if coping mechanisms are seen as temporary measures to help hold the fort until the situation returns to normal, then education would lose the opportunity to benefit from some of the most important lessons of the war. The challenge is to deal with coping mechanisms as catalysts which can open up new insights and possibilities for the future of education. They should not only help us cope with the present crisis, but must also signal new ways of doing things better in the future. They should not simply serve as a crutch to prop up the education system in a time of crisis, but should also serve as a bridge leading to major change and an improved system of education.

EDUCATION AND THE VISION OF A POST-WAR SOCIETY

What is the vision of a new society that Sierra Leoneans wish to see emerge from the lessons of civil conflict, and what role can education play in realising this vision? Judging from the events that have led to the present cease-fire and peace talks, as well as the 'cards' tabled so far by both sides, some dimensions of this envisaged society can be sketched out as follows:

Becoming a caring society again

Both the Government and the rebel movement have emphasised that re-settlement of refugees and displaced families should be the top priority in the re-construction process. In addition, the Government has already instituted a commission to deal with the burning issue of national reconciliation. These are all clear signals of a recognition that Sierra Leone must once again learn to be a caring society. This notion does not imply a romantic or idealist version of caring. It simply means that greed, selfish consumption, blatant corruption, and indifference to the plight of others must be consciously discouraged in society. Whilst there is much that needs to be done in terms of economic recovery and national re-construction, it is also important to cultivate safety nets for the disadvantaged and vulnerable. Without such a new and caring approach, Sierra Leone risks losing sight of the real lessons of the civil war.

The challenge for education is how to infuse appropriate values and attitudes into the curriculum in order to promote a caring society. Indeed, the more immediate challenge is in

the area of adult education and community mobilization, which happen to be extremely weak in the context of Sierra Leone's elitist system of education.

Safeguarding democracy and human rights

All too often caring for others is associated with charity and goodwill, especially by powerful groups in society. The recent experience of Sierra Leoneans in exercising their right to free and fair elections to determine who will govern them is a major lesson which has changed attitudes in high places. Politicians, soldiers and rebels alike have been left in no doubt that most Sierra Leoneans now cherish the democratic process and support upholding of human rights in their society.

When Sierra Leoneans resisted the pressures of the ruling military junta and braved the guns and bullets meant to stop them from going to the polls in February 1996, they were sending a clear message to the soldiers. Whilst the people are grateful for the guns that liberated them from the APC one-party dictatorship, they are not willing to be ruled by an unelected band of soldiers whose only source of authority is the gun.

Similarly, when Sierra Leoneans defied the threats of the RUF rebel movement, that it would unleash mayhem if people dared to go to the polls, they were also sending a strong message to the rebels. The people do not need a destructive and murderous rebel uprising to liberate them. They are prepared to take their future into their own hands through the democratic process.

These are undoubtedly the strongest gains to emerge from the civil conflict that has plagued the country for the past five years. They mark a major turning point in the search for peace, with the realization that Sierra Leoneans had finally come of age and were no longer prepared to tolerate the senseless war and its destructive effects on their lives.

The country now needs to safeguard and build on these gains, for its rapid re-construction and future development. One of the key players in this regard is the National Commission for Democracy which, paradoxically, was instituted by the military regime to convince people that it favoured a return to democratic rule. Ultimately, however, the responsibility for safeguarding democracy and human rights must rest with the education system. This is yet another major challenge for those who seek to harness the process of education to the overall goals of national re-construction and development in Sierra Leone.

Educational renewal

What seems clear from the foregoing, is that there has to be a major educational renewal in Sierra Leone, if the lessons of the war are to be taken on-board in the process of reconciliation, reconstruction and development. This task is made more complex by the fact that Sierra Leone was already in the early stages of implementing a 'new' system of education when the war broke out. This new 6-3-3-4 system has a wide range of positive features, but it would be unfortunate if the focus on its implementation did not allow adequate attention to be given to the type of renewal implied by lessons of the civil conflict.

The main thrust of the new system is to cater for a wider range of talents and abilities, as well as ensuring that opportunities are provided for most learners to develop their full potential in a less elitist system of education. To this end, efforts are being made to ensure that all those who are eligible will have access to 6 years of primary schooling. Thereafter it is hoped that those all who wish to go further, and can afford it, will find a place in a 3-year cycle of Junior Secondary education.

Beyond this, provisions become highly diversified. A small percentage of academically-inclined pupils will go on to 3 years of Senior Secondary education, after which they may enter basic 4-year university degree programmes. The majority of those who complete junior

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secondary school will be able to further their education in a variety of technical/vocational institutions and in some cases go on to tertiary level studies.

In addition, the curriculum for the whole system is expected to be overhauled in line with a new orientation towards science, technology, commerce, and other imperative curriculum areas for nation building.

Some of the challenges posed by the lessons of the war will no doubt be addressed by the innovations of the new system of education. However there are a wide range of ethical and moral issues which the system cannot afford to neglect. These have to do with the institutional ethos prevailing in the system, the way in which schools are organised and managed, the relationship between those in authority and their clients, the values that are transmitted through rules of behaviour, etc. In this regard a few examples of the dilemmas posed by these challenges are in place.

Conflict is seen as a major problem, and there are many who would wish to suppress or even deny it for the sake of 'peace' in the country. However, Sierra Leone has had too much of the old style of conflict management involving hypocrisy and duplicity. It is now time for the education system to take the lead in promoting more enlightened forms of conflict management. A certain degree of conflict and tension is always good for institutions and society in general. It simply implies accepting the existence of different values, interests, and perspectives which have to be managed within a democratic society.

Sierra Leone needs to make full use of all its human resource potential through a non-elitist system of education. However, it is futile to believe that elitism can be eliminated through any new system of education. Mistaken ideologies of a meritocratic system for determining who benefits most from education, have always proved susceptible to manipulation. There is nothing wrong with people wanting the best for their children, and also being prepared to use all available resources at their disposal to this end. Indeed, this leads to inter-generational mobility which can only be good for development. Already there is growing interest in private education, by parents who want to ensure that their children will not be denied access to senior secondary schools (and subsequent university education) within the new 6-3-3-4 system of education.

In any case, it is important to acknowledge that every society needs its elites! The challenge now is how to be sure that the education system produces what Ali Mazrui[6] calls an 'elite of labour' rather than an 'elite of leisure'. How do we make sure that those who get the most out of the education system rise to the challenge of giving of their best to society and their fellow citizens, instead of demanding further rewards from society simply because they have been educated.

Another challenge is that education should now promote much more enlightened or dynamic moral values for a modern African society. This should now replace the archaic values championed for so long by the old education system. This is one way of beginning to deal with the cancer of sycophancy in society.

Against the background of these challenges, it remains to be seen whether the new 6-3-3-4 system of education which is now being implemented holds out lasting answers, or will prove to be just another in a series of impotent reforms.

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[6] Mazrui, A., *Political values and the educated class in Africa*, Heinemann, London, 1978.

CHAPTER IV

Colombia: country and schools in conflict

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Before ever feeling passion for a woman,
I gambled with my heart and violence took me over.
José Eustasio Rivera, *La Vorágine*

INTRODUCTION

Colombia is an inherently heterogeneous country. It is characterized by geographic diversity, a multi-ethnic population, a cultural mosaic producing a variety of intellectual and artistic expressions, as well as by a lack of a sense of national identity and of an institutionalized representative system, combined with a high degree of social inequality. Such social and cultural diversity therefore renders it difficult to understand the economic, social and political factors underlying the process of deterioration the country is currently undergoing. Violence has become more than a temporary problem and represents one of Colombia's main historical pillars.

In this perspective, this paper seeks new ways of interpreting the phenomenon of violence specific to Colombia and to establish its possible ties to education. In order to do so, it is necessary to address the question by going beyond an analysis of the present situation and to examine the social and historical background of the process of modernization in Colombia.

COLOMBIA AND THE PROCESS OF MODERNIZATION

The process of modernization in Colombia is characterized by its remarkable speed, the intensity of change, as well as by its inequity. In other words, there are significant differences in the way in which differing regions and social classes were affected by the process of modernization.

The magnitude of demographic change alone has been tremendous. From a predominantly rural population in 1950 (70% of a total of 8.7 million inhabitants), demographic pressure and intensive rural to urban migration accounts for the fact that by 1960, 61% of a total population of 25.5 million lived in urban areas. Today, 76% (of a total population estimated at 37 million)[1] reside in the four largest cities (Bogotá, Cali, Medellín and Barranquilla) in Colombia.

As Giraldo & López (1994) stated: 'The transition from a rural country to an urban one, resulting from the phenomenon of violence, has also triggered a transformation of equal

[1] Department national de estadisticas. *Census 1993 results*. DANE, 1996.

importance of traditional values based on religion, family relations and political affiliation to traditional parties, into a set of ethics based on despair and corruption'(p. 278).

Over the past fifty years, Colombia has adopted successive economic modernization projects largely inspired by European and North American models. As a result, the country has oscillated between the poles of *poverty-wealth* and *underdevelopment-development*.

Although poverty has decreased over the last two decades (according to the Basic Unsatisfied Needs Indicator), the proportion of the population living below the poverty line remains very high (64.6% in 1992). Although the proportion of the urban population living below the poverty line went down from 48.6% in 1978 to 44% in 1988, it rose again to 46.4% in 1992. The rate in rural areas remained stable between 1978 and 1988 and was estimated at between 70.4 and 69.5%. However, during the recent crisis of the agricultural sector, rural poverty increased from 26 to 35% between 1991 and 1993. Furthermore, the gap between rich and poor has been growing. Indeed, since 1990, the gap between the real per capita income in rural and urban areas has risen by about 36 percentage points[2]. In more general terms, it may be argued that the tension between underdevelopment and development is quite paradoxical. The socio-economic scenario oscillate between exterior growth and social disintegration, economic development and social violence, industrialization and the underground economy.

The contradictions inherent to the process of modernization in Colombia are clearly illustrated by Giraldo and Lopez (1994). They argue that our experiences of modernity have infiltrated our individual and social epidermis, our geography, habits, religion, classes, beliefs, ideologies and political practices. These, in turn, primarily affect the lifestyles of upper income groups and elites, as well as that of the middle classes, among small entrepreneurs, businessmen, technicians and employees. The individual and collective lifestyles of the overwhelming majority of the population, however, remain unaltered (p. 262-272). As a result, it is not surprising to find different models of socio-economic development and modes of social identification within the same territory or even within the same individual psyche. From one city, neighbourhood, or social class to another, social representations based on pre-modern, modern, and even post-modern world views coexist. Nor is it surprising to note how rapidly cultural and social changes have taken place. Londoño (1995) expresses this clearly in stating that the golden rule in Colombian history lies in the fact that 'in this country everything changes twice as fast as in any other developing country (p. xv)'.

Therefore, the process of modernization, characterized by a remarkable speed of change, inherent tensions, as well as a differential impact on different social strata, is a potential threat to the cohesion of the social fabric in Colombia. As a result, the accumulated contradictions of the past fifty years, between an essentially closed, traditional, pastoral society and one characterized by the new, modernized model, are expressed through violent channels. Violence nor only becomes a mode of expression, but also a mechanism for th resolution of social conflicts.

VIOLENCE IN COLOMBIAN SOCIETY

Numerous studies and analyses of violence in Colombia have proliferated since the 1960s. A vast range of disciplines have contributed to the study of this phenomenon including: sociology, economics, history, anthropology and psychology, as well as epidemiology, communications and violentology[3]. Many artists have also focused their work on the theme of

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[2] Colombia's action plan in favour of children—PFAI—Current situation for 1996 and the perspectives for 1998 and the year 2000. Santafé de Bogotá: Presidency of the Republic, July 1996.

[3] Colombia is perhaps the only country in the world that has an expert group dedicated exclusively to the study of violence. Carlos Alberto Uribe Tobón (1990) in 'Culture, violence culture and violentology', *Review of anthropology*, vol. 6, no. 2, refers to them as 'that peculiar group of specialists who practice the new discipline of the Colombian social sciences, *violentology*".

violence. In plastic works of art, such as those by Alejandro Obregón, Carlos Granada and Luis Caballero, for example, entire series are dedicated to this theme. In literature, famous writers such as José Eustasio Rivera, Eduardo Caballero Calderón, Gabriel García Márquez, Manuel Mejía Vallejo, Gustavo Alvarez Gardeazábal, Jorge Eliécer Pardo, Fernando Vallejo, have all written about the different forms of violence that the country has been going through and that is so characteristic of its cultural history. Nevertheless, in spite of this abundant scientific and artistic production, many claim that much remains to be examined regarding the historical development of violence in Colombia. This is particularly true of the most recent wave of violence.

Because of their objective and comprehensive nature, two studies in particular are worth discussing here. The first of these is *Violence in Colombia* (1962), by Germán Guzmán Campos, Orlando Fals Borda y Eduardo Umaña Luna; and, *Colombia, violence and democracy* (1987), a report prepared by an interdisciplinary team of ten specialists, upon the request of the governmental Commission of Studies on Violence.

Following Guzmán et al. (1962), the literature produced focuses on the origins of violence, which is seen to stem from political affiliation, as well as from and socio-economic factors such as the effects of the expropriation of peasants and, more generally, of the country's modernization. In one way or another, the analyses of the phenomenon focused on unravelling the structural factors of violence.

According to Sánchez and Peñaranda (1991), since 1975, the theme of violence has been going through a 'reawakening', characterized by the transition of the analysis of violence as a political factor to being a phenomenon studied in a *long term perspective*. The occurrence of violence is now considered as a structural element of the country's social and political evolution. There has also been a shift since 1975 from a global perspective to a regional one in which analyses tend to concentrate on the relations between the agricultural and class structure, peasant expropriations by emerging classes, and the links between the local, regional and national political dynamics (p. 28-35).

The report undertaken by the Commission of Studies on Violence, considered to ba a very rigorous assessment of the situation in the 1980s, concluded that 'Colombia had ended up by becoming a place where multiple forms of violence exist, 'which did not exclude, but rather surpassed the political dimension'; they now overlap and reinforce one another in such a way that the country is on the verge of a chaotic situation, which could easily translate into widespread anarchy'. The Commission also identified 'types of violence' (as they will be referred to from now on) and found a common denominator amongst them, namely limited democracy which does not recognize the pluralistic nature of the society it claims to represent. The fact that not all citizens are allowed to freely practice their rights generates inequality amongst them (p. 39).

The Commission of Studies on Violence came to question the nature of political violence and identified three other forms including socio-economic, socio-cultural, and territorial violence. These three types of violence are reinforced by an overall culture of violence which is reproduced through the main agents of socialization including the family, the school, and the media. Moreover, by defining violence as 'all of the individual and group behaviours and acts which cause death or injury onto others, whether physically, morally or emotionally', the concept of violence has become broader. By encompassing moral injury, violence may be said to have taken root in the heart of Colombian society. It is not necessarily the poor who commit acts of violence. On the contrary, Colombians are more likely to kill one another because of their living conditions and of their social relations rather than to gain political control of the State (p. 11-27).

Following this study and a number of social and political events in the country, the time

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was ripe to adopt the ninety-one constitutional reform, which dramatically altered, at least in theory, the degree of civil participation in social affairs and allowed for more pluralism and tolerance as the pillars of citizenship and civil society.

Because of the scope of the Commission's document, it became a model for subsequent studies undertaken over the last decade. These studies primarily sought to understand the various forms of violence and to identify its actors: from massacres, drug-trafficking, paramilitary activities, to self-defence groups, popular militias, mercenaries, guerrillas[4], juvenile street gangs, and common criminals.

In sum, these studies establish an overall picture of the problem of violence in Colombia, of its nature, possible origins, magnitude, and the gravity of the problem at the macro level. Nevertheless, Sánchez (1991) highlights the lack of general studies that examine the links between daily life and violence, women and violence, the effects of violence on the family structure (p. 38)[5], schooling and violence, and finally, the interactions and cultural meanings associated to violent situations.

Finally, it is necessary to clarify, as did Gaitán (1995), that 'Colombians are not the ones responsible for outbursts of violence; on the contrary, it is the kind of institutions and political organization we have chosen (. . .). Furthermore, the dynamics of violence have shown us that Colombians are not the most violent people but that the history of Colombia has been characterized by special events and circumstances, tied to the political regime and judicial institutions, which have favoured the emergence of violence (. . .). Therefore, we are not rare specimens, scarred by a violent past that haunts us like a nightmare, passing on violence like a lethal virus, from generation to generation. On the contrary, appropriate decisions were taken in the past which allowed the country to return to tranquillity. Today, it would also be possible' (p. 395-97).

SCHOOLING AND VIOLENCE

Studies of violence in Colombia have concluded that violence is becoming increasingly widespread, generating multiple effects which are impossible to disentangle. Such analysis is also based on the assumption that its *long-term perspective* is not only rooted in the structural elements of society, but also in the intensity and frequency of violent acts, which have become incorporated into our daily lives in a subtle manner. Furthermore, indifference has transformed schools into a reproductive and, at times, generative institution of violence.

In addressing the role of schooling and its relationship to violence, it is necessary to undertake an analysis of the complex nature of violence. This implies that the phenomenon of violence be decomposed from the micro-, specific, and everyday level, to the general, structural and macro-level. One should attempt, at every step, to determine what are the various types of violence at hand, the different expressions and acts of violence and the manifestation of violence in the field of education. Furthermore, it would be useful to link the elements mentioned above with the factors and circumstances associated to violence, social relations and cultural meanings which accompany acts of violence, the niches and social dynamics which generate violence, and finally, with its actors and structural elements.

The study of violence has not been a priority in the field of education in Colombia. As a

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[4] Even though the guerrilla phenomenon is not a recent event on the timeline of violence in Colombia, it is undeniable that during the past decade, it has suffered major transformations due to different social, political and cultural factors of national and international dimensions. Analyses of this question should be kept in mind.

[5] Since 1991 research has been conducted with a view to addressing this deficit. See, for example, (i) *Exploratory study on behaviour associated to violence*, undertaken by an interdisciplinary team composed of: Miriam Jimeno, Luis Eduardo Jaramillo, José M. Calvo, David Ospina, Ismael Roldán, professors from the National University and Sonia Chaparro with the support of Colciencias; and (ii) studies carried out by the Colombian Association for the Defence of the Abused Minor.

result, the knowledge that does exist on many of these aspects is limited. Nonetheless, there are a number of studies of national scope, such as *The violent school: ethnographic research*, (Parra et al. 1992), which sought to examine the culture of violence in schools and its impact on the future of schools and peace. Furthermore, the Regional Investigation Project on the Quality of Basic-Skills Education in Colombia ('Pirceb')[6], aims to understand the role schools have played in shaping the citizen. The project examines how the presence of authority and power, tolerance and discrimination, justice and violence affect everyday life in primary schools.

In sum, these two studies and the ethnographic records of the Pirceb project were published in the form of a qualitative database by Lozano y Cajiao (1995). This paper is organized according to the following main points: 1) School culture and its relation to violence, 2) Socio-structural factors and causes of violence in the education system, 3) Possibilities of building an educational program for peace.

1. School culture and its relation to violence

Education analysts in Colombia, and in Latin America in general, agree that school culture is an issue which must be addressed when reflecting upon the role of education in a context of cultural transformations.

Furthermore, it is necessary to realize that new forms of violence have appeared, replacing the ruler, the donkey's ears, the dunce's cap and the punishment corners, which were abolished several years ago in Colombian schools. On this topic, Camargo (1996) argues that: 'within the educational institutions, there are certain events, relations, and situations which bear the seeds of violence, symbolizing the meaning of violence, such as: carrying out justice with your own hands, annihilating the ones who are different from you, and using force as a privileged instrument to resolve conflicts. It is obvious that people do not all kill each other in schools even though it has been known to happen in the past and it is expected to occur in the future. However, such violence would only take place in specific circumstances where the following matters are at stake: personal and social development, new opportunities and individual recognition. In such circumstances, violence affects the way one plans out one's life, by having a negative impact on: interpersonal relationships, visions of society and on the possibilities of construction and, therefore, on the kind of life one leads in both the public and private arenas.' (p. 7)

In this perspective, the study of school culture and the analysis of its complexity is an asset to understanding the reasons underlying the outbreak of violence and its relationship to schooling. Examining the nature of school culture and power[7], is very useful because it facilitates the visualization of violence in all its essence, by bringing to light the mechanisms and dynamics of power, knowledge and desire. These are considered to be the nodes of conflict in school culture.

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[6] Inter-institutional study co-ordinated and developed by the research team of the Educational Division Foundation -EDF- (FES) between 1991 and 1992.

[7] On this point, Parra (1995, p. 130) claims that the school culture is an essential matter to comprehend the school and its relationship with society and modernity because the school culture refers: to the forms of social organization in school institutions, to the values and regulations that supply it with information, to the concept and management of power, to participation, to conflict resolution, to the rules controlling violence, to the relationships between teachers and students, to the discipline, to the nature of knowledge and the way of learning and treating it. Being as it is perhaps one of the most complex and powerful pedagogical instruments, which the school can depend on, it is not only intended to carry on with its work in the field of knowledge exchange but rather to perform the task of forming citizens. The fact that the school culture is expressed in daily life and that it is in that life, and not in scholarly speeches on democracy, means that it bears the fruit of values and helps strengthen them along with regulations and ways of seeing and living life.

Power: In Colombia, the institutional configuration and social organization of schools have made it possible for power to function by means of control, homogenization and reproduction. This is compounded by the concentration of its jurisdiction on 'micro-powers' found in individuals, groups or parts of the school institution. Independent of all stable, judicial systems, courts and other official regulatory mechanisms, these 'micro-powers' generate violence.

The exercise of power, by means of control, is centred on the discipline used to homogenize students. In order to establish discipline, one seeks to control the body: uniforms and the prohibition of manifesting expressions of love are but a few examples of how this discipline is implemented. Time is controlled by strict timetables where everyone does and learns the same thing at the same time. Physical space is used as a means of controlling and watching over all of the activities undertaken at the school.

This dynamics of power creates a resurgence of 'micro-powers'. On the basis of the Pirceb project, Cajiao (1994) affirms that 'one of the mechanisms used for the process of school institutionalization is the constitution of an absolute power incarnated in the image of the teacher. The school master, the educator, represents above all authority. First and foremost, the role he plays is imposed on knowledge with authority, that is by the formal set of regulations that he always chooses himself and by the habits and customs the children have received from their families and cultural groups. These habits, in turn, are adapted to the school codification with a kind of morality of what is right and wrong. This is the tradition passed on to schoolmasters, which, in spite of the renewal of the pedagogical, ethical and epistemological discourse, has persisted with notoriety' (p. 41).

In everyday life at school, the teacher's absolute power fluctuates between the strict application of the rules to the administration of judgements and condemnation of the students' attitudes, behaviours, feelings and abilities, at times at the teacher's whim. As for the students (especially teenagers), they must deal with a very weak scholastic judicial system (or none at all). They therefore end up undertaking violent acts, such as: *la vacuna* (the vaccine)[8], *el boleteo* (ticketing)[9], self -defence and, sometimes, 'take justice in their own hands'. When faced with such situations, the teacher's 'micro-power' is taken over by that of student groups. Nevertheless, one must point out that it does not necessarily function as a reaction to the teacher's 'micro-power'. On the contrary, it sometimes has other roots originating from sources other than the school's 'micro-powers', such as juvenile gangs, popular militias[10], guerrilla groups, and common criminals who intimidate their teachers by preventing them from performing their tasks or by victimizing them.

The reproduction of violent acts and the students' exercise of 'micro-power' can be coupled with other forms of power. The means of social control range from threats and intimidation to the survival of the fittest. Where the teacher does not exert any power, as in the playground, the bathrooms, the school shop and when entering and leaving the school grounds, self-defence mechanisms come into play. Students or groups of students may, for instance, grant protection to their companions in school groups or gangs, in exchange for money, food, homework or any other benefits.

The way in which power is exerted in the school suggests, among other things, that the presence and force of authoritarianism (from all towards all) is a constant element in social relations. Moreover, the threats, screams, mockery, punishments, humiliation, public insult and, in some cases, physical aggression, are characteristic of the way conflict is manifested. The nature of these kinds of interaction among classmates and their teachers and among students themselves, brings into light the idea that there is a dominating group or a dominated one. Furthermore, it could be conceived as a social construction where different

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[8] Quota of extortion to avoid aggression.

[9] An expression to appoint sanction mechanisms utilized by the guerrilla, drug traffickers and kidnappers.

[10] Paramilitary groups that exercise 'justice' within a community.

'micropowers' are at odds with one another making the school culture the niche fomenting multiple forms of violence. The lack of confidence in authority, the use of exclusion as a means of punishment (expulsions, school suspensions), the weakness of the school structure, the fragility of school judiciary systems, undermine the role of schooling in the shaping of citizens within a democratic society. It also highlights the impossibility of opposing the culture of violence that is so deeply imbedded in Colombian society, and by the difficulty of setting up an alternative culture.

Knowledge:[11] The management of power in Colombian schools interferes with the relationship established with knowledge. By focusing on a distributive rather than a generative approach, it is likely to give rise to authoritarianism, discrimination and exclusion: mechanisms that generate and reproduce violence.

In every day life at school, the authoritarian relationship with knowledge materializes itself and establishes its administrative nature. Considering it as the absolute truth, formulated and completed by others, it has chosen the pedagogical approach which focuses on its distribution, thereby rendering it impossible for anyone to participate in its elaboration. As a result, creativity, imagination, the joy of learning, the necessity of understanding and changing the world, become stale. It will transform the thirst for knowledge into a banality. Knowledge is considered to be valuable only in the framework of the school whereas it is seen as being useless and ineffective in one's personal and social life.

The process of socialization is not the monopoly of the formal education system. It also includes processes that lay outside the school to include other agents such as the street, peer groups and the media. These agents allow children and youth to have access to modern systems of information storage, diffusion and circulation, which are more flexible and versatile than those used by the school. They clearly point out how obsolete, systematic and unilateral this authoritarian relationship to knowledge can be in schools.

The fact that scholastic knowledge is obsolete and socially inefficient, leads to a questioning of the quality of education in terms of its capacity to develop productive citizens. How to explain the fact that formal education fails to help youth participate competitively in the national as well as in the international arena, in artistic, athletic or scientific-technical production, and in the utilization and effective appropriation of social values. At the macro-level, it is not surprising that the quality of education is correlated to social-economic status: the greater the poverty, the lower the quality. In addition to low quality education, poorer segments of the population are also subject to low coverage, social inequity and exclusion. At the micro-level, the curriculum's lack of relevance, its dogmatism, authoritarianism, generate discrimination, school failures and drop-outs. This further increases the number of individuals who live in poverty, on the fringe of society.

Therefore, marginalization, social inequity and exclusion, fomented by the school, deprive many Colombian citizens of legally participating in society. As a result, they may then adopt illegal ways and carry out violent acts.

Desire: Defined as being the guiding light and main source of life's vitality, as the factor determining the kind of life we live and want to live and as the element allowing for uniqueness, difference and creating life projects, which are determined in terms of the meaning they give to life, to an individual and social world. It is easy to understand that, at school, desire is subjugated by or opposed to power, in the sense that power aims to control and not to search for the meaning of the interaction with knowledge, social norms of living in society and with authority.

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[11] This concept is used in a broad sense. Therefore it includes the concept of knowledge and information.

In schools, the sense of obligation and desire overlap with one another since there are other non-cognitive dimensions to human relations such as sensitivity, willingness, the body and sexuality, which have no place in the classroom. If at all present, these dimensions would be integrated into the curriculum or applied strictly to the regulations. The school curriculum would be given priority above all of the students' and teachers' desires and needs.

The social effectiveness of education can therefore be measured by its ability to help students create their own life projects, on the basis of their desires, individual capabilities. These life projects should be aimed at their integration into the social and working world, while maximizing their competitiveness and creativity. It could therefore be argued that given the difficulty of creating a curriculum which brings together all facets of the individual, the dynamics and interactive relationships between school, power and knowledge, as mentioned above, are very low.

This is further confirmed by the Atlántida Project (1995) which suggests that schools have lost the capacity to transmit two fundamental notions of socialization, namely the past and future. The notion of the past has been omitted since schools have been unable to vividly and efficiently transmit cultural identity. As for the future, schools have not helped students build their own life projects by giving them a social meaning. Thus, the school system has isolated itself from history as well as from the making of the future; it remains paralysed in the inert present. One must then consider separating schools from society and what schools have to propose from students' expectations, as a fundamental phenomenon (p. 24).

Therefore, the nature of the inter-relationship between schools and power, knowledge and desire, is such that they negatively reinforce one another and the numerous kinds of violence in Colombia. This relationship has created a school culture which is part of the national spiral of violence. As a result, schools are losing their potential as spaces for resistance and cultural resolution of this social conflict.

2. Socio-structural factors of an educational nature

The specificity of school culture in Colombia and its ties to violence can be explained by socio-structural factors related to educational development as a component of modernization. According to Parra y col. (1992), the following three structural elements have fomented the violent façade of school life:

* The quantitative expansion of the school system has had an adverse impact on quality. Such low quality is reflected in the improvised training of teachers, the stress palced on the transmission of knowledge, and the glorification of the curriculum which goes against the formation of values needed for social living.

* The client-patron national policies seeking to increase the number of schools has resulted in filling them up with unprepared teachers, who have no academic vocation but rather a bureaucratic vision of teaching.

* The over-bureaucratization of the educational structure and the poorly understood associations that defend people against unethical and anti-pedagogical acts (p. 21-23).

Other more deep-rooted factors of structural violence may be added to the structural elements previously mentioned. They include ethnocentrism, patriarchism, class segregation and racism all of which have marked Colombian culture for centuries. Educational policies have not been immune to the expansion of these factors in society. Furthermore, these elements have been present, in a disguised manner, in school programs, textbooks and in course contents. Moreover, they are strengthened in the implicit values spread by the various daily interactions at school.

Such considerations help explain the occurrence of submission, non-solidarity, illegality, corruption, double standards, the law of the survival of the fittest, mistrust of authority, discrimination and the annihilation of the other. The combination of these elements,

contrary to social norms required for peaceful social co-existence, highlight the deterioration of the social fabric and the lack of ethics in Colombian society. While schools should be able to oppose or slow them down, they have on the contrary reproduced violence and projected it onto new generations.

3. Possibilities of building an educational program for peace

These observations lead to a number of questions. First and foremost, it is undeniable that 'the school will draw criticism and opposition to the current state of things, through the daily attempts to re-build a group of beliefs and morals for regulating individual and group behaviours, to search for peaceful means to resolve conflicts by dialogue, to promote the respect and joy of diversity, and solidarity in facing all of the problems associated with school, personal and community life, and to experiment with reciprocal interdependence as an inevitable human condition, upon which personal, mutual and environmental care, superimposes itself as a universal value' (Estrada y col. 1996. p. 37). Secondly, it is worth clarifying that not all Colombian schools are necessarily violent and that the current situation does not automatically correspond to a particular type of school. On the contrary, we have attempted to show that the Colombian school system is going through a cultural phenomenon which has gained importance in relation to the bipolar tensions, between poverty and wealth, backwardness and development that the country has been experiencing over the past fifty years.

Although the current situation is worrisome and at times discouraging, the past few years, particularly since the promulgation of the General Education Law (1993) and in accordance with the framework of the new constitutional law, new projects and actions have been set up which aim to build a school that opposes violence and promotes peace.

It is worth mentioning efforts aimed at strengthening democracy in schools and emphasizing the formation of the social values of citizenship, such as: school governments, manuals on living in society, school employees, programs to resolve conflicts through dialogue and compromise, institutional, educational projects built around the notion of living peacefully in society and of peace itself. Nevertheless, there are few studies which show their effectiveness and impact on daily life, in areas other than the school grounds. Moreover, new research relative to the participation of children and youth in their school government, particularly in poor, urban areas of Bogota (Estrada y col. 1996) shows that: 'one frequently finds that the speech taught on the participation of children has the following characteristics: (i) it is sporadic and depends primarily on the priority that external, educational agents attribute to the topic (investigators, directors and/or supervisors); (ii) it is a make-believe game—'the game of participation': if it pertains to school elections, they are led by school teachers (depending either on the candidates or on the issues to which the committees have given priority). On the other hand, no process of participation undermines the imposition of authority nor of power in the school'. (p. 53)

It is clear that the actions undertaken have emphasized the democratization of the school, focusing on living in society and within a social organization. As for the management of knowledge and the possibility of making the school a niche for building life projects around science, technology, sports and arts, experiences are even rarer. Knowledge is clearly not recognized as being one of the facets of democracy in schools.

Schooling clearly has the potential to oppose the culture of violence and to break the institutions' ability to make seemingly creative and sensible proposals that have in fact been readapted to its structure while giving the impression that it has been transformed. The key lies perhaps in finding those elements which integrate or unite the fissures or missing elements, resulting form the fragmentation. In that sense, one of the integrating elements could be the reinforcement of schools and of individual, life projects with social responsibility.

Attempting to link the school with the construction of life projects implies providing answers to the most important questions regarding education in the contemporary world. This questioning has taken on much importance because of Colombia's cultural heterogeneity and ambiguous social evolution. Indeed, how can education promote equality among a heterogeneous group? How to link the local level with the national and universal ones? One should depend on teachers whose choice of life revolves around the academic world. This is a suggestion which is supported by the Science, Education and Development Mission[12], more specifically by García Márquez (1994), who claims that 'life would last longer and be happier if every individual could work in whatever field he likes, and only in that.' (p. 16)

In this manner, the school's social efficiency, social harmony, the current connection with information, knowledge and know-how, would perhaps take on new meaning. These would fill the students with desires and capabilities necessary for their integration into the social and labour market, in an ethical and competitive fashion; they would oppose inequity, hopelessness, exclusion, and intolerance, which have already been detected in schools as sources of violence.

On the other hand, Colombians would go along with the tragic prophecy of our Nobel Prize Laureate, Gabriel García Márquez (1979) '(...) it was foreseen that the city of mirrors (or of mirages) would be demolished by the winds and banished from the memory of mankind, at the very moment when Aureliano Babilonia would have finished deciphering the parchments, and that all that was written on them would not repeated for ever and ever, because families condemned to hundred years of solitude would never have a second opportunity on earth' (p. 347).

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[12] The Science, Education and Development Mission, (September 16, 1993), set up by the President of the Republic, César Gaviria Trujillo, included ten commissioners: Eduardo Aldana Valdés, Luis Fernando Caparro Osorio, Gabriel García Márquez, Rodrigo Gutiérrez Duque, Rodolfo Llinas, Marco Palacios Rozo, Manuel Elkin Patarroyo, Eduardo Posada Flórez, Angela Restrepo Moreno, Carlos Eduardo Vasco Uribe, to 'draw our imaginary map of the country'.

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CHAPTER V

Educational destruction and reconstruction in Cambodia

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The reality of Cambodia over the past twenty-five years, particularly in the area of education, has been unique. In order to sketch the outlines of the devastation of Cambodia and its struggle for reconstruction, a framework for discussion of the situation and the circumstances leading up to Cambodia's recent past is needed.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1954, Cambodia became independent from France and, in the same year, the Geneva Conference acknowledged Cambodia's neutrality. However, a reflection of the general discord presenting itself in many countries of the region after the Second World War, was also felt in Cambodia. This was compounded by an almost paranoid fear of the influence of communism displayed by many Western powers.

In 1963-64, an extreme dissident socialist group had already formed. Training initially in Viet Nam and later in the North East jungles of Cambodia, they contested inequalities in the distribution of wealth and opportunity within Cambodian society. Rejecting a moderate socialism for a more extreme one, the group, under the leadership of Saloth Sar (Pol Pot), extolled an extreme Maoist philosophy and called itself the Khmer Rouge (Red Khmer). The peasant revolt in Battambang Province in 1967 reflected such dissension in rural areas.

Spillover from the war in Viet Nam

Turmoil from outside the country also had a serious effect on the stability of Cambodia. The conflict between North and South Viet Nam, for instance, and the intervention of the United States of America on behalf of the Rightist South Vietnamese Government spilled over into Cambodia, adding to the instability of the already frail political situation. The bombing of Cambodia that began on 18 March 1969, not only caused the death of many Cambodians, but also resulted in the devastation of large segments of the rural infrastructure, including the destruction of a tremendous number of farm animals. The 1970 coup, supported by the United States, saw the replacement of Norodom Sihanouk by General Lon Nol signalling the beginning of a civil war that set Cambodian against Cambodian which adversely affected the fabric that held Cambodian society together.

The continuing civil war and the incursions by the American-backed South Vietnamese intensified the climate of insecurity and resulted in massive displacements of populations. It is estimated that by 1972, 'more than two million Cambodians (were) made homeless by the war between Lon Nol and the Khmer Rouge.'[1]

Only in mid-1973 did an act Congress halt the US bombing raids on Cambodia. However, the hiatus that saw the start of a violent and dark period for Cambodia was already created.

The Khmer Rouge period

On 17 April 1975, the Khmer Rouge conquered Phnom Penh, emptying the city and all other major towns in Cambodia. The following weeks saw the targeting for extermination of educated people, monks and religious leaders, government workers, people who spoke foreign languages or even those that wore glasses. Anything that was seen as a sign of 'decadence' and a product of 'foreign learning' was destroyed. The goal was to restore Cambodia to an agrarian state controlled by the Khmer Rouge.

Unheard-of atrocities were perpetrated against the population—people were slaughtered, families separated and sent to work camps in far-flung areas of the country, and children indoctrinated into unquestioning acceptance of the 'Organization.' Health care was eliminated, schools destroyed, family life replaced by a communal existence. Endless days of hard labour and indoctrination sessions saw the very nature of Khmer family life and culture close to the point of collapse.

This continued for three years, until 7 January 1979, when the Vietnamese entered Cambodia. Their initial intent was to repel the Khmer Rouge from their own borders; however, finding themselves confronted with little resistance, they pursued their thrust into Cambodia, pushing the Khmer Rouge to the border of Thailand.

Vietnamese occupation

While in Cambodia, the Vietnamese troops faced armed opposition from an uneasy coalition of Royalists and Khmer Rouge which launched its attacks from the border areas of Thailand. This period was also characterized by a United Nations embargo against the Vietnamese-sponsored government. Although many nations could not provide formal aid to Cambodia throughout the period, some assistance was provided through Viet Nam, by the USSR and other East Block Countries. The collapse of the USSR marked the end of both Soviet and former East Block assistance to Viet Nam and Cambodia and became a decisive factor in the withdrawal of the Vietnamese military and civilian occupation force from Cambodia in 1989.

Peace and reconstruction

The years following the Vietnamese withdrawal until the UN-sponsored Peace Accord in October 1991 and subsequent elections in May 1993, were complex years for Cambodia. Aid began to trickle in as a number of countries offered assistance to Cambodia. However, the civil structures were largely unable to deal with the demands of donors and the massive needs for human resource development and reconstruction. The election of the new government in May 1993, saw an accelerated effort and growth in governmental capacity to re-start the political, economic, legal, social and educational systems. The destiny of Cambodia, now on the brink of entering the 21st century, is in its own hands.

EDUCATIONAL RECOVERY

Collapse of the education system

The implications of these developments on education are clear. At the end of the Khmer Rouge regime, 1979, the whole educational system was in a state of collapse. Education in Cambodia had to be re-started with 2,481 primary schools and 13,619 teachers to educate

724,058 enrolled students. The majority of teachers were those who had received a few years of education in the years prior to the Khmer Rouge regime, who had survived, and who were willing to become teachers. Only some 87 of the 1,009 teachers in higher education prior to the Khmer Rouge period had survived. A number of these had also fled to a third country for re-settlement from the refugee camps in Thailand.

The challenges of educational reconstruction

The government made education a priority, utilising the former Phnom Penh University as a teacher training institute. This institute initially implemented short training courses in order to provide for the lack of school teachers as quickly as possible. With assistance from both the Vietnamese government and the Russian and Soviet Bloc countries, the programme was later expanded to train and re-train secondary teachers. The teacher training institutions in the provinces followed the same methods - short courses, short training periods and similar bridging strategies in order to make sure the teachers were keeping ahead of the students. School buildings, if they had existed at all, were poor, in a state neglect or damaged be the ravages of war. Teaching materials and books were non-existent, chalk was hard to get and paper for notebooks was a continuous problem. Some of these problems persist to the present day.

A number of groups are currently carrying out analyses and studies regarding the future directions of educational development in Cambodia. For the most part, these studies are linked to government planning, either through the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MOEYS) or the Council for Development of Cambodia. Both of these groups have access to technical assistance sponsored by donors agencies.

Co-ordinating aid and the role of government

Co-ordination, however, is complex. This is largely due to the fact that a number of donor nations are motivated by a desire to gain or regain political hegemony in Southeast Asia, including Cambodia. A number of donor agencies have been accused of only generating employment for their own national consultants. Notwithstanding this, the majority of technical assistance is excellent and has proven to be invaluable as Cambodia plans for its own independent future.

There are also a number private groups carrying out research in education, including many individuals who arrive in Cambodia with the purpose of writing a thesis or preparing a proposal for funding. Although their insights may be helpful, often they are not because of the short duration of their stay and particular focus of their studies. Most researchers agree that any planning or reconstruction of the education system must be done through government channels. Concerns relative to the need for technical assistance in education to be apolitical have also been voiced. This includes a degree of freedom from external/foreign political influences. To develop a well-balanced society, education should not be used as a tool of politicians. Attempts are now being made to ensure autonomy from politics. Appointment to the various leadership positions in higher educational institutions, for instance, must be free from political influence. As far as is possible, appointments, within the Ministry and government schools, should be made on the basis of a set of objective criteria and merit.

Curriculum and ideology

Schools are not the appropriate ground for political activities in any grade. Textbooks in Cambodia do not reflect ideology, and political views are not supposed to be a part of lessons. However, it is difficult to filter-out an individual teacher's political point of view. In the run-up

to the coming elections in 1998, it will be difficult for political parties to refrain from pressurizing teachers, students and administrators to support their political views. The public use of school openings and events for political speeches and reward of school administrators who overtly or covertly support one party or another is unavoidable. This kind of political pressure within the education system is seen around the world, and Cambodia is no exception. Whilst the government makes efforts to avoid more overt and/or threatening action to teachers, administrators and students, it is difficult to completely stamp-out such phenomena.

Public funding

The government of Cambodia has often stated that it has a strong commitment to education within the tasks of reconstruction of the state (cf. National Programme To Rehabilitate and Develop Cambodia for ICORC III March 1995). The challenge is to apportion a reasonable share of the national budget to this task. The government has pledged that by the year 2000 they will devote 15% of the annual budget to education. In 1993, education received 8 percent; in 1996, it is expected to receive 10.07 percent. It is hoped that during the next meeting of the Consultative Group on Cambodia, the MOEYS will be able to re-affirm its support for increasing the share of education in the nationally-controlled expenditures in order to provide a sounder base than at present for donor support.

In this regard, the continuing civil war, waged by the Cambodian government against the outlawed Khmer Rouge forces, often generates violence against those people who live in the war-affected areas. This also diverts financial resources from the rest of the country, reflecting a critical lack of funding due to moneys spent on attempts to destroy the insurgent army and bandits that roam many parts of the country. The Khmer Rouge continue to control areas of the country that are extremely lucrative sources of both timber and gems. They mine, cut and sell gemstones, mainly outside of Cambodia, creating financial resources that are used to wage war against Cambodia and divert funds that could be utilised for the common good of the Nation. One of the mandates of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia, 1992-93, was to disarm all the armed factions. This, however, was a failure and may be said to be a contributing factor in the ongoing violence in Cambodia.

Continuing insecurity

A universally-acknowledged footnote to this conflict is the fact that at present there are still two land-mines in the ground for every Cambodian child, often in places where children gather firewood, water their draught animals, and look for berries and grass. Mines continue to be laid everyday, in spite of an appeal by the King and others who support an international ban on land-mines. Children experience the effects of war and violence on a daily basis in many ways. Much of it taking the form of personal bereavements of family, families' loss of land due to land-mines and armed conflict and the loss of government revenue for education. Because of these issues the quality of education, in many areas of the country, particularly in rural areas, is well below that required for proper human resource development.

Social reconciliation

Past wars in Cambodia were not the direct result of classroom learning. Much of Cambodia's difficult past has been a result of external pressures. However, it may be said that there is much that can be done in the classroom to work towards peace in Cambodia. This implies that the tendency within cultures to form cliques must also be addressed in order to achieve a government programme of national reconstruction. This cannot be achieved if a society is fragmented and uncoordinated. There is much that can be done through the education system,

especially in schools, to work toward harmony and peace-making among the children and teachers and staff. To achieve this, an open approach to workshops and seminars for teachers and the inclusion of peace and harmony should be dealt with in the various areas of the curriculum. Further to this, efforts must be made to create and emphasize the successes gained by co-operation within the school and community - all can bear fruit in the lessening of violence over time.

Children are very astute, and if the government, the community leadership, and parents and extended family tell the children that social harmony has value and then act in ways contrary to this value, the children will draw their own conclusions. For example, if the attitude of teachers, parents and significant others in society reflects racism and anger towards regional neighbours children will exhibit the same feelings.

As countries draw together in bilateral agreements and multi-lateral international groupings such as ASEAN, old hatreds, sources of much violence, must be resolved and not brought forward into the new century. Education in schools and colleges can do much to change the old attitudes. However, if strategies for peace are to work, they must include parents and civic leaders as learners, as well as the younger generation of children and teenagers. To fall back upon racist rhetoric when attempting to rouse patriotism is a gambit that must be defused and finally extinguished by sound teaching in the schools and with parent and civic groups. Educators, especially school teachers, can lead the way; they just need the information, skills and authority to do it.

Addressing the environmental impact of war

Acts of war not only affect people, but also the environment, which in turn destroys the means of existence for many people. Cambodia is no exception in terms of degradation of the environment. During and after long periods of armed conflict, those with power reach for the easiest method of providing economic sustenance and this is often the forests or natural resources from the ground. Much of these resources should be a legacy for future generations. Cambodia presents a clear example of deforestation for economic exploitation. However, much of this does not provide government with economic resources, but instead provides a means of procuring weapons of destruction to be used against the elected government forces and against harmless civilians. It should also be noted, that the government is also selling forested land faster than new trees can be planted.

People are losing their lands and with the forests gone, the rain and heat patterns, in the neighbouring agricultural lands are undergoing change. The whole region is affected by this phenomenon, causing the land to flood in the rainy season without roots to hold the water; the run-off from the rain is silting the rivers; and endless species of flora and fauna are lost from the ecological systems present in the country. Many Cambodians, including the King and environmental groups have drawn attention to these problems. It is going to take education to change this pattern and to pressure, not only the Government of Cambodia, but governments of other regional countries.

The MOEYS is now working on a curriculum addressing environmental issues. It will be included in the grade and high school textbooks. It is hoped that it will not be too late for Cambodia. If the programme is successful and people become aware of the issues in a practical way, it will then be up to government to listen to them.

Ensuring basic education for all

Taking into account Cambodia's history and analysing the effects of the last twenty-five years of conflict on education, it is clear that, since 1979, the government has placed a high priority on education and has tried very hard to ensure some basic education for all. However, a major

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effect of a period of war is that one must focus on quantity when the conflict is over. It is a sad reality that many children have missed years of education because of the period of hostilities.

The Government of Cambodia has made a clear decision to provide schooling for children as quickly as possible. They have done this by providing schools to attend and teachers in the classrooms, although many may not be qualified for the job at present. Now the focus must turn towards upgrading of the quality of education. This, however, presents a number of problems of priority. For instance, although the quality is improving, equality of gender still presents a problem. At present, urban male students make up the majority of the student body of the various institutions of higher education. In rural provincial areas the most salient problem is trying to retrain teachers of the quality needed to prepare students for science, English, math examinations which will allow them entry into the more prestigious departments and faculties of higher education.

Education versus training

The government will be required to make some hard decisions about equality and financial resources in higher education. In areas where war has decimated human and physical resources, as it has done in Cambodia, choices are hard and complicated, and they must be made with as much clarity, care and information-sharing as is possible.

Many Cambodians 'missed-out' on educational opportunities because of the terrible lost years from 1975. In order for them to earn an income for their families and to contribute to the reconstruction of Cambodia, they must be provided with skills and employment. Indeed, skilled labour is in short supply in Cambodia. Notwithstanding this problem, Cambodia similarly to many countries with past colonial ties, instils in its children the aspiration that they should never work with their hands. Tertiary education is set-up as a standard for all education. From grade one, the school system leads children to believe that they must somehow enter the less than one per cent of the population who attend higher educational institutions. The enormous need for skilled labour, traders, and craftspeople is ignored by the majority of young people, who are setting themselves up for an experience of failure when they cannot enter university.

Cambodia now has 16,000 students repeating the final year of secondary school three times. There is no mechanism of assessing whether or not tertiary education is a reasonable and appropriate goal for these particular students. The most well-equipped technical institute in the country does not attract enough candidates. The school of agriculture has the lowest enrolment figure among all higher education institutions. This is alarming given that 77% of Cambodia remains largely agrarian. This issue is not specific to Cambodia in the region as a whole.

The role of NGOs

Lastly, it should be pointed out that questions of education within Cambodia, while primarily the responsibility of the Cambodian government, are, in fact, often being dealt with by international donors through technical assistance from varied government and non-government sources and multilateral partners. Non-governmental organizations in Cambodia had traditionally taken a leading role in education during the time of the United Nations embargo of Cambodia (1979-90). During that period, as bilateral donors expanded their assistance, NGOs re-evaluated their respective roles within the education sector. They are now looking to see where their special talents can be best used in service of the new reality in Cambodia. A number are involved in skills training for the large number of land-mine disabled persons in the country; programmes for assisting and training the blind and the deaf are NGO-sponsored; a school for helping handicapped children is provided by an NGO.

This would more than likely be true in other countries in a post-war period. It is hoped that the government does make use of the long and rich service of the NGOs within Cambodia and study their records of both successes and failures - we often learn a great deal from things that go wrong. Cambodia has partners who are willing to help in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the country. As education is the key to the future, it follows that the government should take full advantage of available educational resources, using them wisely, by building on the experience of its many partners as well as on its own experience in determining the long-term success of the process leading to true peace in Cambodia.

NOTES

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CHAPTER IV

Educational disruption and recovery in Palestine

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INTRODUCTION

The West Bank and Gaza Strip were occupied by Israel in 1967. Although the occupied territories retained many of the pre-existing legal and administrative structures, the military authorities superimposed more than 1,000 military orders which practically cancelled the legal provisions. Education was one of the major sectors to have suffered from these overriding military orders. As a result, the education system in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has had somewhat of a schizophrenic status. While the administrative terms of reference remain those of the Jordanian and Egyptian systems, the education system has been controlled and censored by the Israeli occupation authorities since 1967. When the Palestinians gained control of their education system in August 1994, the Ministry of Education (MOE), the largest Palestinian service sector, had to simultaneously confront numerous challenges while reconstructing the education system.

This paper will examine the Palestinian response to the schizophrenic nature of the education system. The paper begins with a description of the education system under Israeli administration (1967-1994). It is followed by a brief overview of educational policies during the Intifada period and the innovative Palestinian responses to Israeli obstructionist strategies particularly during the period of the uprising. The following section examines the impact of extended occupation on the Palestinian education system, particularly in terms of deteriorating quality. The paper then goes on to present the current challenges that the Palestinians face in regaining control of their education system.

EDUCATION UNDER OCCUPATION

The Palestinians had never controlled their education system prior to 1994. Indeed, since the Ottoman empire, the formal Palestinian education system had been administered by foreigners. Modern formal education in Palestine grew out of a reaction to Ottoman attempts to promote and impose Turkish culture. Later, during the British mandate, expansion of formal education came as a response to the British need for civil servants. Mahshi (1989) summed up the educational situation during that epoch in the following terms: 'despite the inadequacies of government education by the British, the traditional value of education, especially formal schooling, was strengthened over time. Formal education was perceived as a means for securing white-collar jobs with steady income, and to enhance social status, in a predominantly peasant society.'

After the 1948 war and the creation of the state of Israel on parts of British Palestine, the West Bank was administered by Jordan while the Gaza Strip was administered through

Egypt. Furthermore, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) established schools in refugee camps throughout the West Bank and Gaza, as well as in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. The fragmented situation was further complicated after the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza when the education system fell under the complete control of the Israeli authorities.

Multiple delivery systems

In addition to the duality of education systems in the West Bank and Gaza, one may add the diversity of delivery systems. Indeed, the schools in the West Bank and Gaza can be classified into three clusters: Government, UNRWA, and private schools. In 1996, government schools catered for 67.6% of all students, while UNRWA served 26.3% and private schools 6.1%. Table 1 shows the relative weight of each of these school types within the overall Palestinian education system.

TABLE 1: Schools in West Bank and Gaza listed by authority, 1995/96

	Schools	Classrooms	Students	Teachers
Government				
1995	1,084	11,817	418,807	13,533
1996	1,112	12,524	447,822	14,742
UNRWA				
1995	253	3,702	161,332	4,370
1996	259	3,918	174,284	4,642
Private				
1995	147	1,563	40,521	2,175
1996	147	1,640	40,765	2,210

Source: Educational statisticsal yearbook 1995/1996, MOE & PCBS, PNA.

Before the transfer of power to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), salaries for government school-teachers were paid by the Israeli administration, while UNRWA paid its own teachers and private schools sponsored themselves through student tuition or through some form of charitable support. Since 1994, the entire school system has progressively been unified and adheres to the same curricula, identical class periods and structure.

Highly centralized management and control

A major characteristic of the public education system under occupation was its highly centralized management system. All administrative and decision-making powers, including the hiring and firing of teachers, were entirely in the hands of a few officers in the 'civil administration'. Many teachers were denied their right to oppose decisions pertaining to lay-offs. In the rare cases where such decisions were justified, they were based on 'security reasons'. Furthermore, hiring was also restricted to specific school districts. Hiring a teacher from a different district implied the almost impossible mission, particularly during the Intifada period, of modifying the address registered on the identity card issued by the military authorities. Moreover, decisions to build or expand individual schools were also taken by the Israeli administration.

Although teachers were recruited and nominated by the Palestinian district directors, such decisions had to be approved by the Israeli authorities. Once nominated, teachers did not immediately become civil servants; they had to pass a probationary period which could last from three months to a whole year. Probationary periods are common features of teacher recruitment practices in other countries where the period is used to provide further classroom-

based training and to allow for the assessment of new teachers before final appointment. However, the purpose in this case, unlike that in other systems, was for the military intelligence to approve or refuse appointments. Furthermore, employment conditions were not clearly defined and employment regulations, rights, and responsibilities were never clarified. This resulted in a high degree of frustration and job dissatisfaction among teachers.

Curriculum and censorship

West Bank schools followed the Jordanian curriculum while those in Gaza followed the Egyptian curriculum. Although both curricula could be characterized as being culturally relevant to an acceptable degree, they were not nationally relevant. Israeli censorship ensured that these curricula remained irrelevant to Palestinian nation-building efforts. Military Order 101 imposed the need to have all reading materials, books and periodicals approved by the military censor. Any reference to Palestine or to the Palestinian question were thus systematically censored. Each year, Israeli authorities subjected schoolbooks brought in from Egypt and Jordan to strict censorship, deleting any words, paragraphs, chapters or refusing entry of books that address the Palestinian question, roots, or cultural heritage. It is important here to note that this did not only apply to history and geography textbooks, but also to those used for the teaching of language and religion.

Teaching under occupation was tough and restricted, teachers were not allowed to use any supplementary material to enhance the curriculum which was narrowly defined to mean the textbook material regardless of the degree of irrelevance to Palestinian culture. This restriction was an important factor in demoralizing students and partly explains their lowered commitment to education and the resulting behavioural problems.

In-service training

Teacher training was not a common phenomena and very few discrete training courses were offered. The participation of Palestinian educators, from universities and non government educational institutions, in the design of these courses was restricted by the Israeli authorities. In many cases teachers and directors were requested to attend courses at the Hebrew University, although they were never allowed to take similar courses at local universities. Under such circumstances, the notable efforts made by school supervisors to provide some training through workshops were largely marginal due to their limited resources, often inadequate skills and lack of support.

Even in the rare situations where teachers did find their way to further study/training outside the country, study leave was not easy to obtain. In order to leave even for a limited time, teachers not only had to forgo their salaries but also their appointments. Loss of both salary and job discouraged many teachers with excellent potential from taking sabbatical leave abroad for further training.

THE INTIFADA PERIOD

School closures as collective punishment

The administrative restrictions and military harassment characteristic of education under occupation were further intensified during the period of the uprising. Indeed, since the beginning of the Intifada in December 1987, there had been an escalation of Israeli repressive measures. These severe measures of collective punishment included: (1) the arrest and deportation of students and faculty; (2) intensified financial harassment; and (3) school closures. The imposition of collective closures of educational institutions as of 1988 was but a

new form of a long-standing strategy of interference in Palestinian education by Israeli authorities. The systematic closures of educational institutions for a two-year period may indeed be interpreted as the expression of a policy of enforced ignorance. Such measures were designed and implemented as a form of collective punishment aimed at coercing the Palestinians into ceasing their uprising. Initially justified by the need to maintain order and security, the Israeli policies aimed to render the costs of the uprising unbearable for the Palestinian society as a whole.

The initial sixteen-month phase of systematic closures was followed by a second phase as of May/June 1989. Although this phase was characterized by the progressive reopening of schools, the Israeli obstructionist policy continued both through the intermittent closures of individual schools and universities as well as through curfews. The extent of disruption in the schooling process caused by these measures are clearly illustrated in Table 2. It is interesting to note that it was at the elementary level that the extent of disruption was the greatest. Such an observation clearly contradicts the official Israeli justification of such strategies based on security reasons.

TABLE 2: Maximum number of days that schools were open 1988-89 (total number of school days 205-210)

Level	Total no. days/year	% of school year
Elementary (Grades 1-6)	135	64
Preparatory (Grades 7-9)	115	55
Grades 10-11	85	40
Grade 12	120	57

Source: *Educational network*, no. 2, September 1990.

Alternative forms of education

In response to these military closures affecting education, Palestinians initiated alternative forms of education in the hope of minimizing the educational loss to their children and communities. Neighbourhood communities organized 'popular (off-campus) education' that may be better termed 'underground education' in homes, churches and mosques where instruction was provided by teachers, parents, and university students. 'This community-based education presented a grave threat to the Israeli authorities since they were no longer in control of the process and contents of Palestinian education'. As a result, popular education was declared illegal by the Israeli authorities in August 1988 and locales were repeatedly raided by Israeli military. These raids generally resulted in the arrest of students and teachers, and any person found participating was subject to harassment, arrest, and liable to be jailed up to ten years and to pay a fine of US$ 5,000. The 1988 Al Haq report provides an illustration:

> . . . on 6 September 1988 the Society of Friends of Al-Najah University in Nablus (a community organization providing support to the university) was closed down 'indefinitely' after soldiers raided the Society during a small make-up class for high school students. Two students and two teachers were arrested. In this case the director of the Society was told he would be charged and prosecuted for permitting make-up classes to take place on the premises (p. 298). Due to these measures and to the reopening of schools for interrupted and short periods, popular education ... is virtually non-existent at present (*Educational network*, no. 1, June 1990).

Private and UNRWA schools attempted to implement a second alternative strategy based on distance teaching with study packs prepared to be used by students in homes. This second alternative strategy was also considered illegal by the Israeli authorities.

Impact of school closures

In the absence of viable educational strategies during the period of the uprising, school closures had an adverse impact on the academic, social and economic levels. As of the 1988/1989 school year, educators and school teachers, in particular, began facing a drop in students' academic standards. Teachers had to follow regulations restricting to a maximum of 6% the proportion of repeaters. As a result, students were promoted to the next level even in cases where the assigned curriculum had not been completed. A dilemma was imposed, being out-of-school for an extended period, because of closures, and the danger of illiteracy relapse among second grade students. School closures also severely disrupted the process of socialization of children within the school community. Moreover, it was not possible to recover the academic loss due to short school days, strikes, curfews, and prolonged closures. Lack of continuity and repeated interruptions during occupation was a major disruptive force in the teaching process and resulted in lowered teacher motivation. Finally, Israeli measures against Palestinian education reduced the number of qualified teachers. The education officer announced the closure of all schools on 15 April 1988 and teachers were paid only half of their already low salaries for the month (Al-Haq Report, 1988). As a consequence of such measures, teachers faced difficult financial problems.

DETERIORATING QUALITY

Class size

It is generally recognized that large class sizes have an adverse effect on the teaching/learning process. Large class size and overcrowding has indeed been a characteristic of Palestinian schools. The 1988 Al-Haq report illustrated the extent of overcrowding in the following terms:

> . . . in 1987 teachers reported that in Bethany Elementary School in Izarya [a Jerusalem suburb] there were 55 students in one second grade class. Five of these students had to stand during classes because there was simply no space in the room for extra chairs.

With over 33% of all classrooms comprised of over forty students, Table 3 clearly illustrates the extent of overcrowding. Given the rate of national population growth estimated at 3.7% according to PCBS figures, a major effort in quantitative expansion of the education system must be foreseen in terms of classroom construction. Recent data published by the MOE and PCBS indicate that each student at the basic level has, on average, 1.0 square meters of classroom space, while secondary students have an average of 1.4 square meters/student. UNESCO (1995) described the situation in the following terms:

> The classrooms are very small (16-20m^2). There is often neither enough ventilation nor lighting, and no specialized rooms such as laboratories and suitable playground or sports facilities are available. Many of the buildings have deteriorated to an extent that they are collapsing, as is the case of some rented schools in Tulkarm, Nablus or Hebron. They have cracked ceilings and walls which leak in the winter.

Overcrowded classrooms have many negative effects on classroom management which consequently results in lower student learning. Students' discipline weakens (Mansour 1995), and, more importantly, the quality of the learning process may be reduced as teachers become overloaded. Another aspect of the overcrowding of the school system is the widespread use of double shifts with more than 50% of schools in Gaza operating on this mode.

TABLE 3: Distribution of classrooms by authority and number of students /classroom

No. of students	Government	UNRWA	Private
1-19	666	16	413
20-25	1165	82	320
26-30	1696	162	292
31-35	2098	207	276
36-40	2688	374	159
41-45	2523	755	71
46-50	1253	1754	18
55+	77	2	10
Total	12509	3352	1559

Source: Educational statistical yearbook, 1995/1996. MOE & PCBS.

TABLE 4. Distribution of schools by supervising authority, school shift and stage

	Basic	Basic and secondary	Secondary
Government			
one shift/morning	604	263	8
one shift/evening	1	1	0
2 shifts/ 1 administration	23	13	1
2 shifts/2 administrations	135	18	3
UNRWA*			
one shift/morning	110	0	0
one shift/evening	1	0	0
2 shifts/1 administration	12	0	0
2 shifts/2 administrations	130	0	0

Source: Educational statistical yearbook 1995/1996, MOE & PCBS.
**Note:* UNRWA runs basic schools only.

Drop outs

Although data on enrolment patterns were relatively scarce, the Israeli 'Statistics of the Administered Territories' provide some useful information. These data show that no more than 50% of those enrolled in first grade reach ninth grade and only one third of those enrolled in the first grade reach twelfth grade. These high dropout rates may be largely explained through economic pressures and the increased need for young people between the ages of 14 and 16 to enter the labour market. This is all the more so given the lack of legislation regulating the entry of young people (mainly males) in the workforce. The level of qualification of the workforce has consequently gone down with a resulting shortage of skilled labor (i.e., teachers, pharmacists and other professionals).

Student achievement

Very few studies are available on the assessment of learning achievement since government school educators (which comprise over 70% of all teaching staff) were not allowed to conduct studies. A recent study conducted by Tamir Institution (1991) was designed to investigate the achievement (strengths and weaknesses) of 1,200 Grade 4 and Grade 6 students in Arabic language skills in the following areas: reading comprehension, listening comprehension, grammar, dictation, and writing. The results indicated that both Grade 4 and Grade 6 students have serious deficiencies in almost all of the skills measured. Less than one-fourth of the pupils tested, for instance, were able to correctly elicit information directly stated in the text.

A second study by the same institution (1991) was designed to investigate the nature and extent of the deterioration in student's mathematics achievement. Six major skills were investigated including computational skills, elementary geometry, estimation and approximation, measurement, number theory, and problem-solving. The results of this study indicated that the performance of the fourth and sixth graders was very poor on every one of the six skill areas tested. For example, only 37% of fourth grade students and 58% of sixth grade students were able to solve the following question: 3,479 = 9 + 70 + 400 + ?. The study showed that although students performed well on items requiring simple recall, they did poorly on items requiring deeper understanding.

The National Centre for Educational Research and Development (NCERD, Jordan), conducted a comparative study (1993) to investigate how Jordan and the West Bank ranked among the other participating countries in the International Assessment of Educational Progress (IAEP II) with respect to eighth grade student achievement in mathematics and science. The results indicated that West Bank students' achievement was low. Indeed, the IAEP II international average percentage correct statistics (58) is far above that of the West Bank (33.6). The highest scoring country was China (with 80% correct), and the lowest was Mozambique (28%). The West Bank ranked third to last among the twenty-one countries surveyed while Jordan scored 39.4% and Israel 63%. The performance of West Bank students on the science achievement test was also extremely low (52.2%). The IAEP II international average was 67% and the highest scoring country was the Republic of Korea (78% correct), and the lowest was Brazil (46.6%). Jordan scored (57.6%), Israel (70%) and the West Bank ranked second to last among the twenty-one countries surveyed.

Behavioural problems

Whenever schools are poorly maintained, classrooms are overcrowded, student/teacher ratios are high (33:1 for example), teachers enjoy minimum professional development, curricula are irrelevant, and the schooling process is continuously interrupted, one would expect this to be reflected in levels of students' achievement as mentioned in the previous section. The other major effect of such a situation is on students' psychology and behavioural patterns. A correlation exists between feelings associated with failure at school and the emergence of behavioural problems, 'Institutional violence feeds the violence of individuals, and a vicious circle then sets in' (Mansour, 1996). Based on their experience as ex-students, teachers know how to run systems that are based on student's obedience to teachers. The Intifada planted the seeds of confrontation not only in the streets, but also in the school, within the home and society at large. Students were forced to be aggressive as the Israeli army invaded their daily lives, whether in the school, the home and even in children's nightmares (Mansour, 1996). Mansour refers to students as the 'Intifada generation' rightly pointing out that '. . . the pupils of today are the young people of the Intifada, the same who, just yesterday, were demonstrating and throwing stones at Israeli soldiers'.

Higher education

Palestinian universities were established in the last three decades, the first of which was Bir Zeit University. Significant progress has been made in educational development at the tertiary level with, at present, eight universities and four colleges with over 37,000 students enrolled. Palestinian universities are perceived by the Palestinians above all as centres of political struggle and national resistance. Being independent institutions and enjoying a greater degree of autonomy than schools in terms of academic programs and selection of staff, Palestinian universities played a leading role in resistance and nation-building. Realizing this role, the Israeli authorities implemented the following measures against universities:

- Limiting the expansion of buildings and facilities.
- Limiting students' access to library material (special permits were required to import new books).
- Obstruction of external financial assistance, particularly that originating in the Arab world. Universities were denied their right not to pay value added tax (VAT) which reached 17%.
- Restriction of academic freedom through the imposition of military orders.
  Military Order No. 854 requested universities to apply for annual permits in order to operate. Faced with the rejection of the order by the Palestinians and some Israeli professors, the order was not implemented, although it was retained as a potential threat. Another attempt to obstruct the operation of universities in 1982 demanded that all 'foreign' staff apply for a work permit and sign a pledge constraining their academic and political freedom. The statement of the pledge read as follows:

  > A commitment for granting a work permit for the academic year 1982-83. Following my application for a work permit for scholastic year 1982-83, which was submitted on ----, and without affecting my comprehensive commitment indicated in the above mentioned application, I hereby declare that I am committed not to do any kind of work and not to give any service directly which will help support the so-called PLO organization or any other hostile organization which is considered hostile as indicated in the order concerning the banning of protest actions and hostile publicity.

TABLE 5: Students at Palestinian universities and colleges

University	Male	Female	Total
Birzeit	2161	1370	3531
Al-Quds	928	1181	2140
Al-Quds open university	3055	2462	5517
Al-Najah	4146	2679	6825
Bethlehem	754	1340	2094
Hebron	809	818	1627
Islamic	3790	1910	5700
Al-Azhar	3494	2644	7038
Colleges offering B.A:	1158	1500	2658
Total	21190	15904	37094

Source: Educational Statistical Yearbook, 1995/96, MOE & PCBS, PNA.

At that time, the size of foreign staff (i.e. those not holders of West Bank or Gaza IDs) was critical (approximately half the teaching staff at Bethlehem University and more than 25% in Bir Zeit University). As a result of protests against this measure, several staff members were deported, including presidents (e.g. Dr. Salah of Al Najah University), deans, heads of departments and teachers.

- Continuous disruption of the learning process as a result of student arrests and interrogations, and shootings, not only by the army, but also by settlers. In July 1983, for instance, settlers from Kiryat Arba in Hebron killed three students and injured more than thirty in a gun attack on the Hebron University campus.
- Harassment of university graduates, particularly as of 1992, who were denied the right to apply for positions as civil servants on the grounds that they had graduated from universities that were officially closed. This was an indirect strategy to limit the effectiveness of off-campus teaching strategies adopted by many Palestinians in response to closures, curfews and disruptions.

In a small country with 2 million inhabitants in the West Bank and Gaza, the education sector is the largest service sector. More than 35-40% of the total population are either employed or directly served by the education system. The planning process for the recovery and reversal of the deterioration of the Palestinian education system began with the signing of the 'Declaration of Principles' between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel on 13 September 1993. Very little was done initially both because the outcomes and implications of the declaration were not clear to educators and because of the lack of reliable educational data. In August 1994 the Ministry of Education (MOE) took control over the educational sector, including Basic, Secondary and Higher Education.

Educational authority transfer

The transfer of educational authority to the Ministry of Education (MOE) on August, 28, 1994 was an historic event both in terms of the political development of the Palestinian nation whereby the Palestinians were granted full responsibility over the education of their children for the first time, and also because it reflected the scale of the challenges that faced the MOE from the outset. As the school year usually starts on the first day of September, two days were not enough, by any standard, to prepare for the beginning of a new school year. Moreover, the entire population had very high expectations relative to the newly-founded Palestinian MOE. Given the shortage of time and human resources, the MOE decided that during the first year of operation it was inappropriate to rush into administrative or educational changes. A decision was therefore taken to maintain the management system as it was, for it was not possible to disrupt a system (despite its deficiencies) which people had got used to. The MOE simultaneously initiated more systematic data collection in view of gaining a better understanding of existing learning and enrolment patterns in order to reverse the process of qualitative deterioration.

Demographic data collection

Realizing the urgent need for reliable data, the MOE established a unit in the planning department in view of implementing an Educational Management Information System (EMIS). The development of the EMIS is a prerequisite for any medium and long term planning and decision formulation. This unit was established with the help of UNICEF and funding from the European Union and Sweden. A major co-operation between this unit and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) organized and published the Education Statistical Yearbook for the academic years 1994/1995 and 1995/1996. In addition, the MOE started the process of enhancing its own capacity in educational management and planning. Major steps were taken in the direction of unifying the two education systems (Gaza and West Bank). As all schools now have the same calendar, recruitment procedures, textbook prices, nominal tuition, and supervision procedures, data collection for planning purposes is facilitated.

Setting priorities

As stressed by Weiler (1982) planning depends very much on the specific environment in which it is called to operate. This implies that setting educational priorities is a function of the characteristics of the social and political system within which educators operate. Palestinian society has certain characteristics that are crucial in the process of educational planning:

- Palestinians value education highly, partially because they have realized that it is a portable product in an area in which they have been subject to displacement and

harassment. However, although a significant proportion went on to universities, the quality of education during the occupation period fell dramatically.

- The general economy in Palestine is still weak and the MOE programs are still highly dependant on international aid.

The above characteristics have had a major impact on educational planning and the setting of educational priorities:

1. Education and training systems have to adjust to the requirement of structural changes in the Palestinian economy. The Palestinian economy has indeed become interdependent with the regional economies and expectations are high. This implies the need to develop competitive skills and competencies through education and training of high quality. Education and training that fosters human skills and competencies is a major aim that the MOE is working toward. Because of the value that Palestinians place on education, a growing proportion of students should extend their education beyond compulsory education which will inevitably create a demand for the expansion of school infrastructures. Table 6 indicates that there will be approximately 60-70,000 new students enrolled every year, implying the need for the construction of 40-50 new schools every year.
2. Although improved student learning is the final aim of the MOE, meeting the needs of teachers is the means to reach such an end. All possible efforts should be geared to provide teachers the opportunity, the time, the means, and the materials for improving their practices.

TABLE 6. Expected number of students in Palestine

Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
No. students	629,069	757,196	819,131	879,966	938,491

Source: Students, classrooms, educational gap in Palestine, MOE, PNA, 1996.

3. Palestinian pupils have lived in a closed country where opportunities for travelling abroad have been rare. All school children and university students have been born under occupation. This implies the need for a national curriculum that stresses national values with emphasis on history, culture and modern issues that are linked to global issues. For this reason, the MOE has created the Curriculum Centre whose challenge is to develop a curriculum that stresses the promotion of democratic values and tolerance, and which supports academic and social learning. The curriculum has to guarantee both equity and effective learning.

The MOE is currently shifting to the development stage by strengthening policy formulation through a five-year plan. A major sector of interest for the MOE is the contribution and provision of equal opportunities for girls by increasing their enrolment in rural areas. The most recent data indicates that although the gender gap is narrow at the primary level (48% of pupils enrolled are girls), the gap widens at the secondary level (44% of total enrolment being female).

The MOE is also launching school-based counselling activities (200 school counsellors have been hired) in order to help students overcome psychological problems experienced under occupation.

It is too early to assess the impact of changes implemented since 1994 since the independent education system is still in its infancy. The degree to which the system is able to respond to the basic aspirations of its people and contribute to the international community is a question to be addressed at a later stage.

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